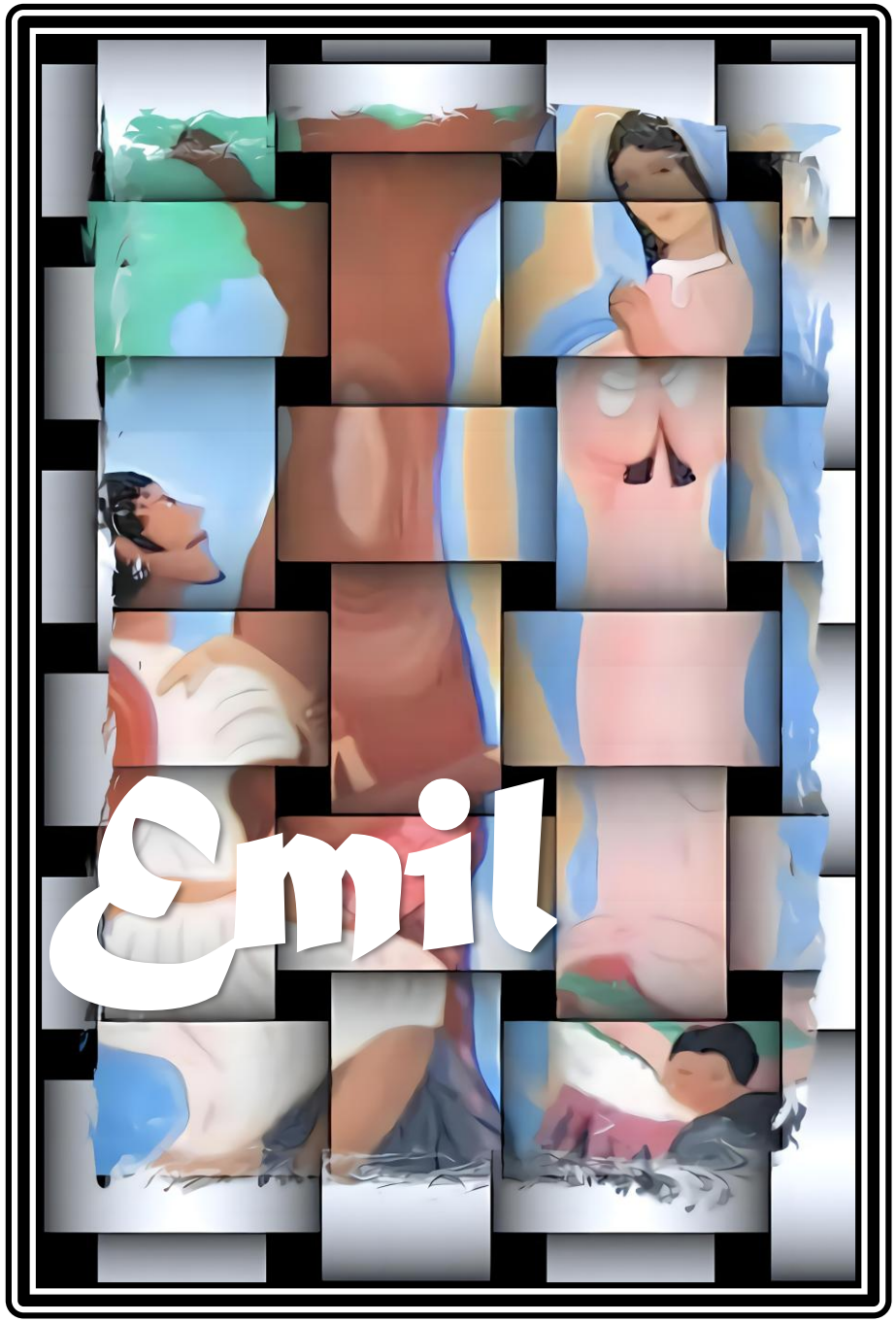
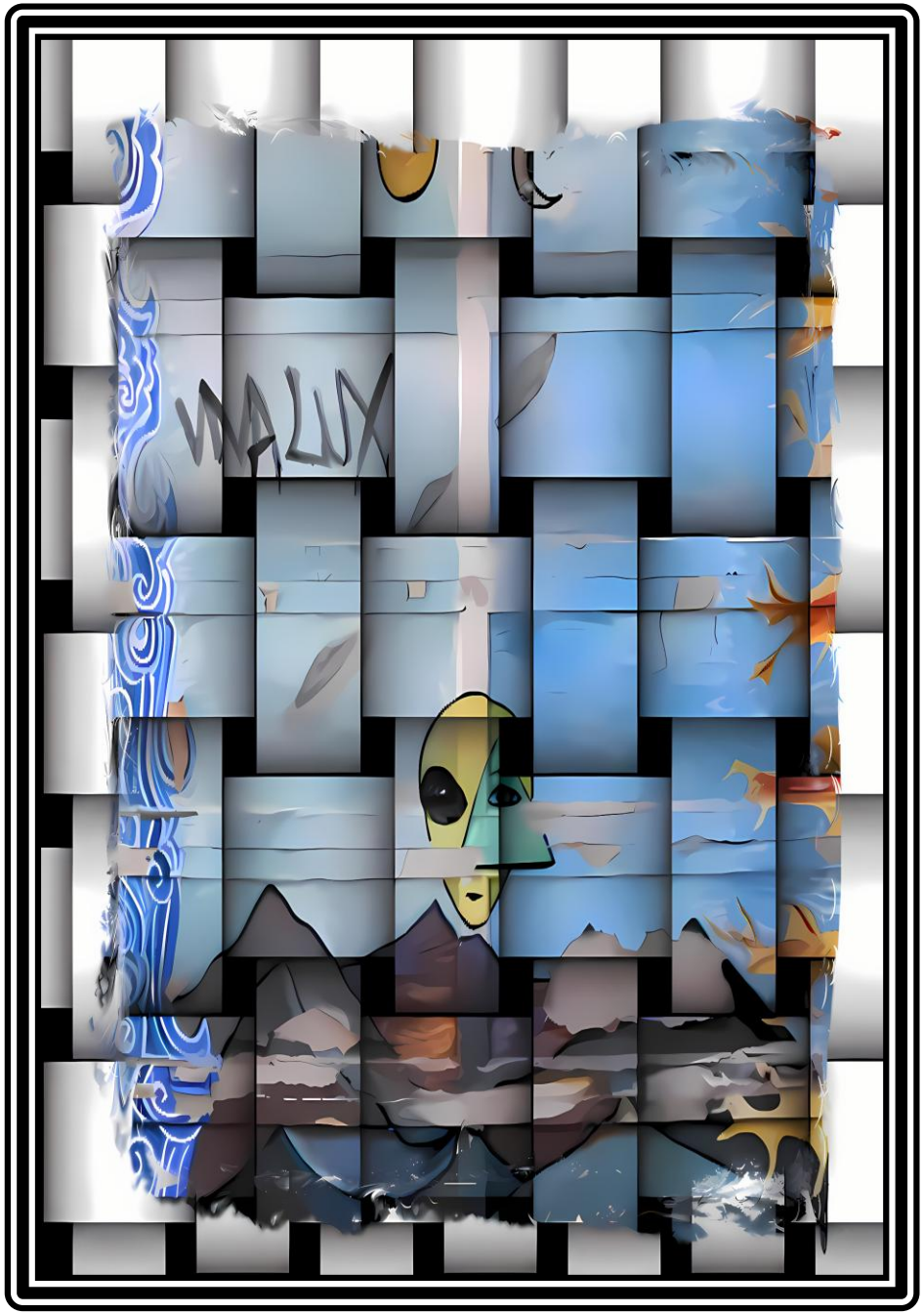


TRUST IN THE SIMPLICITY

OF THE JOURNEY

GIOVANNI METRO STOP GALLERY
WWWG PRODUCTIONS LTD. 2025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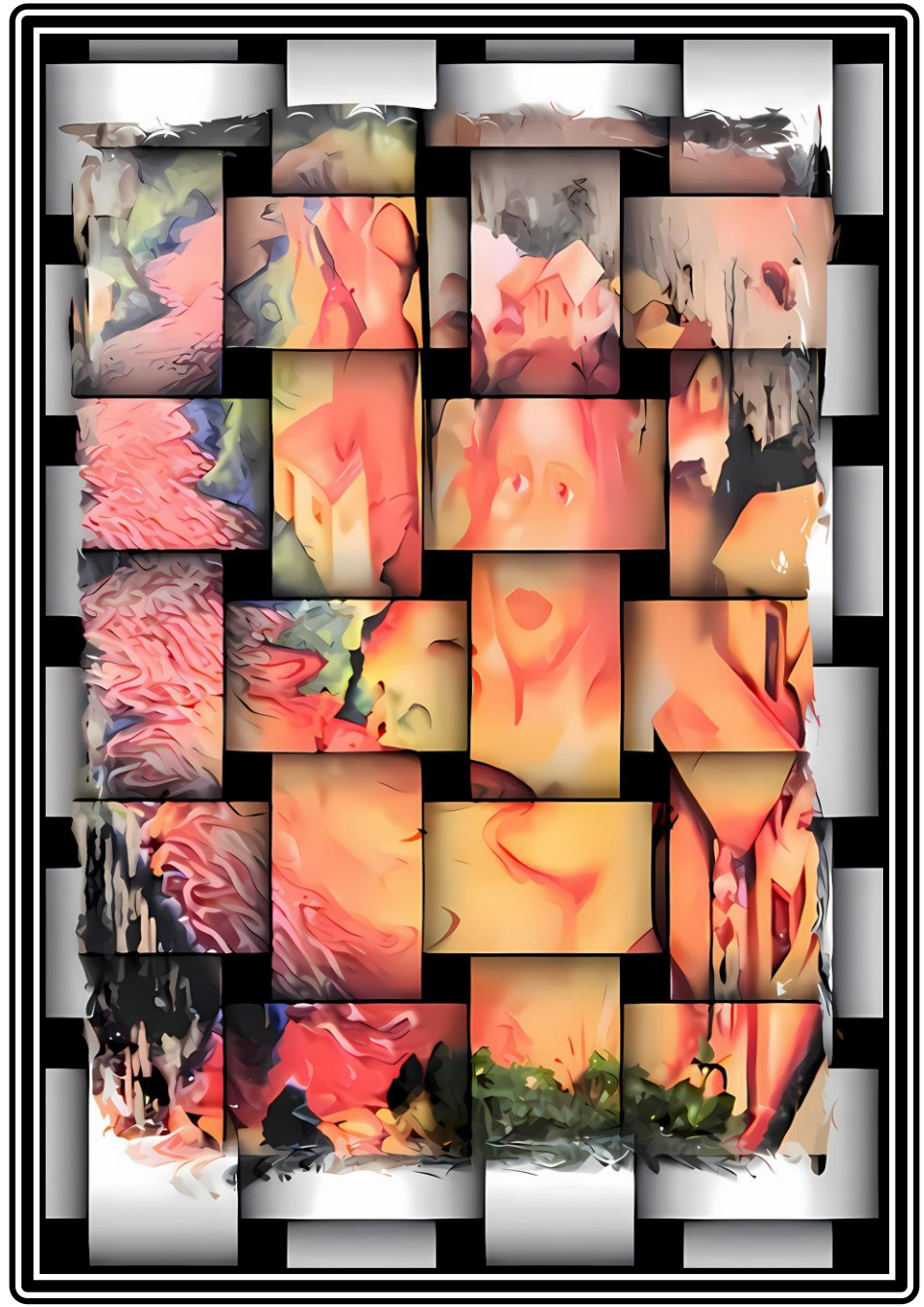


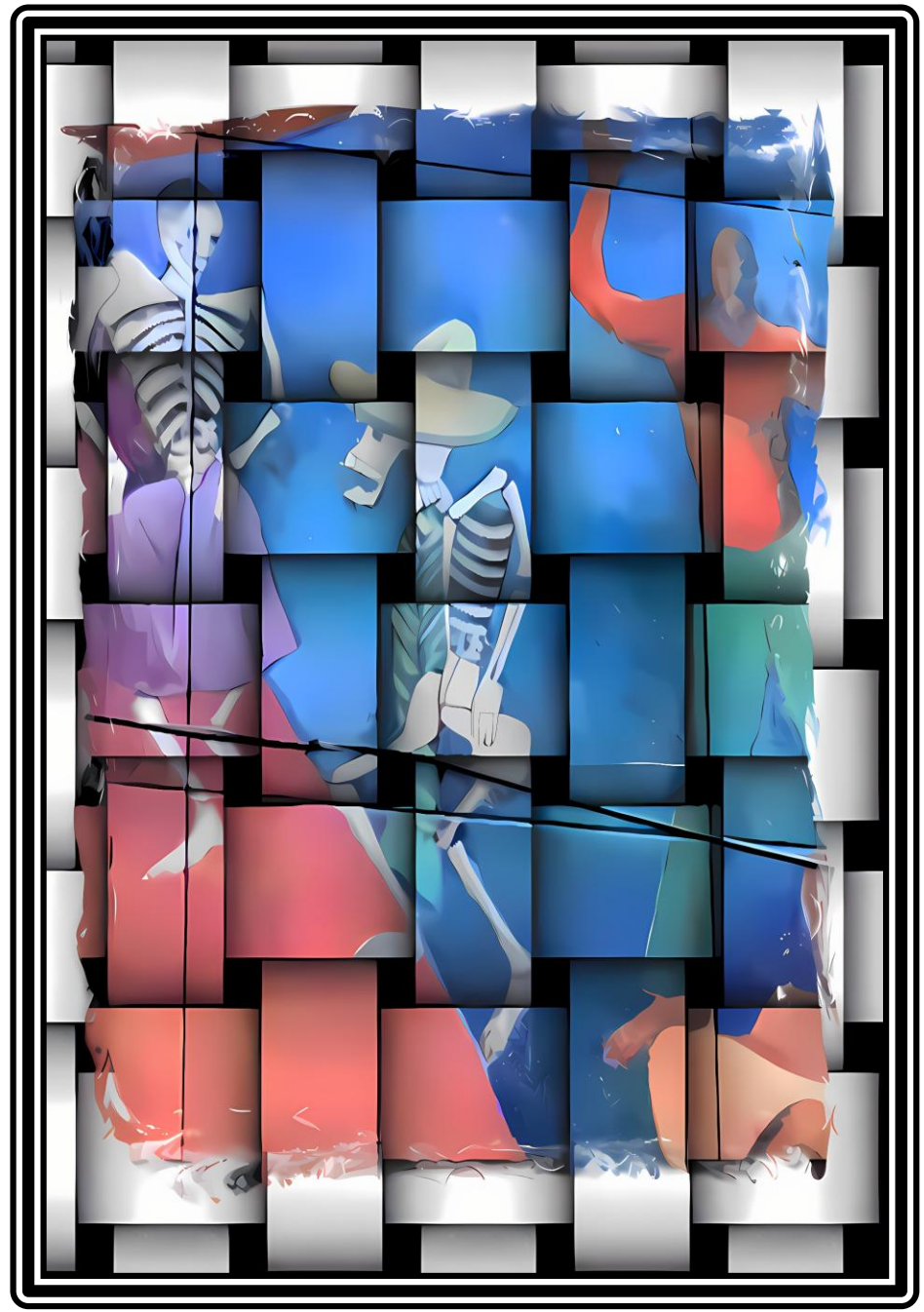
I find myself at Kansai Airport, awaiting my flight back to Singapore, which has just been rescheduled to depart tomorrow morning instead of later tonight.

The reason for my early arrival is quite intricate, rooted in a blend of financial considerations and the peculiarities of my travel arrangements.

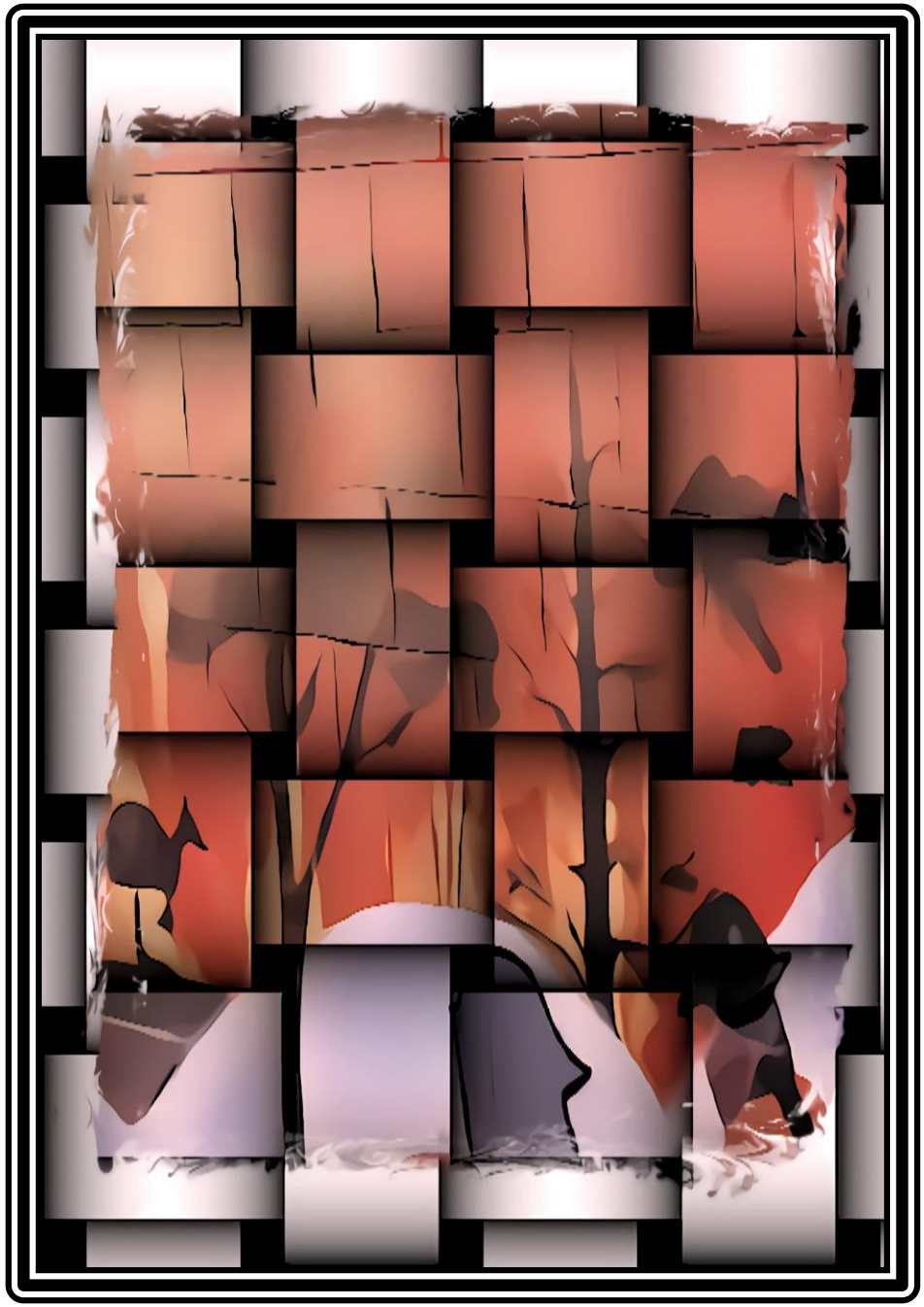
Navigating the complexities of budget travel often requires a level of strategic planning that can seem bewildering to outsiders.

In this case, the timing of my flight, coupled with the need to secure affordable accommodations and transportation, led me to arrive at the airport well in advance.

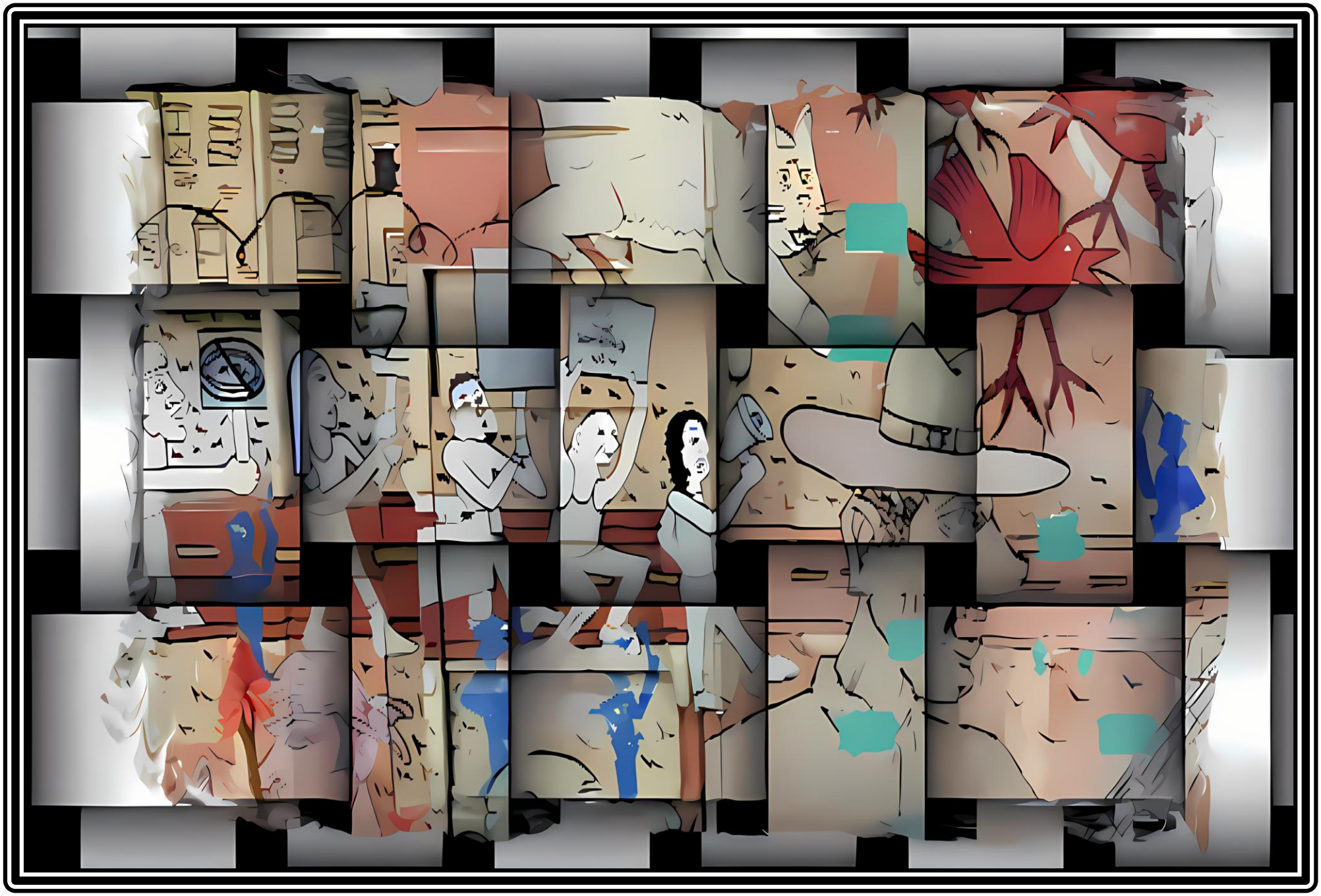
This situation exemplifies the challenges faced by



those of us who embrace a more unconventional approach to travel, where every decision is influenced by the delicate balance of cost and convenience.
Reaching Kyoto is a straightforward endeavor that begins as soon as you exit the international terminal.
Simply make your way across the small bridge that connects to the train station, where you will find the JR Ticket Office conveniently located at the entrance.
Here, purchasing a ticket is a quick and uncomplicated process.
However, navigating to the correct platform can become a bit daunting, especially if you've been overwhelmed by the plethora of "how to" videos

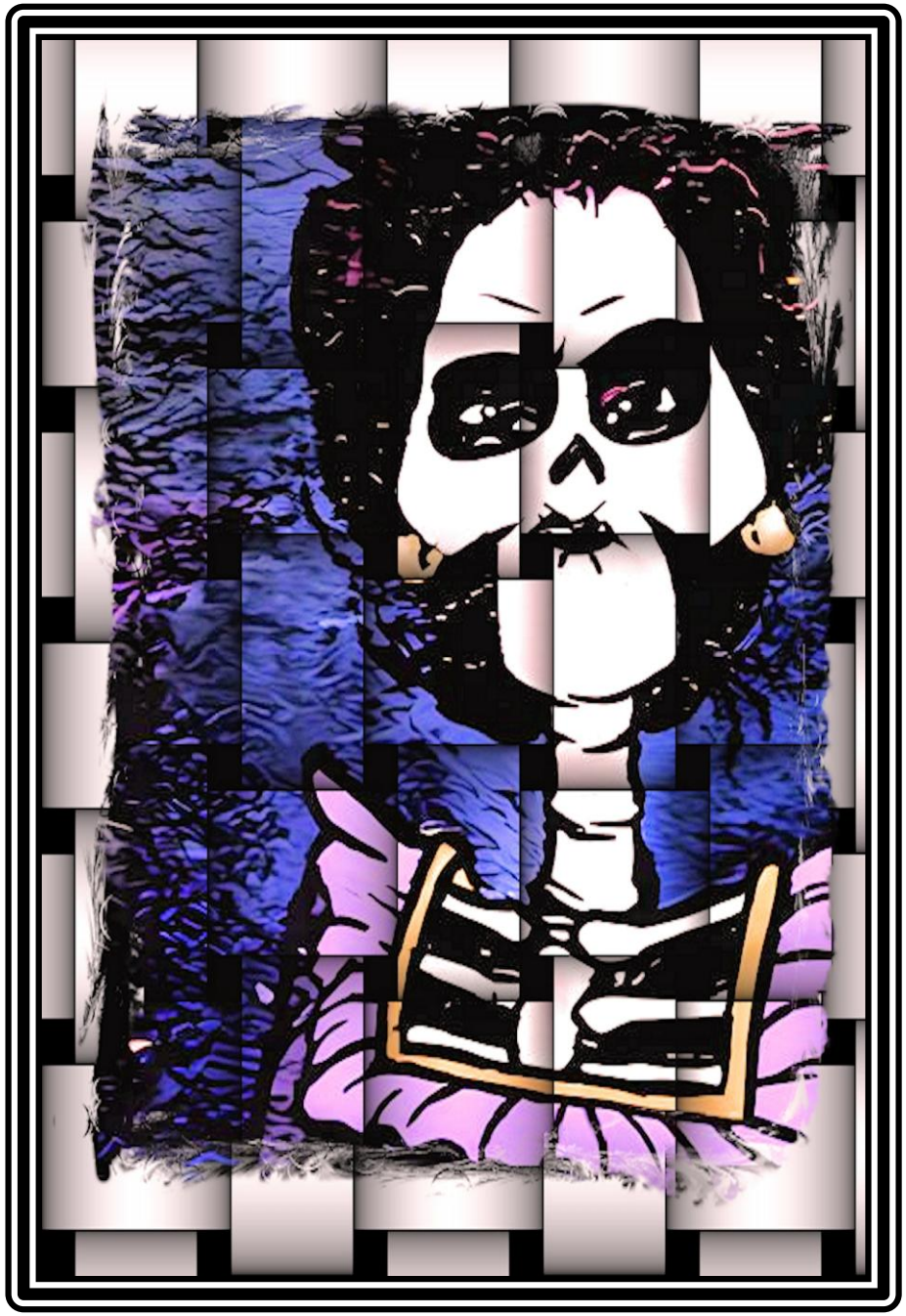


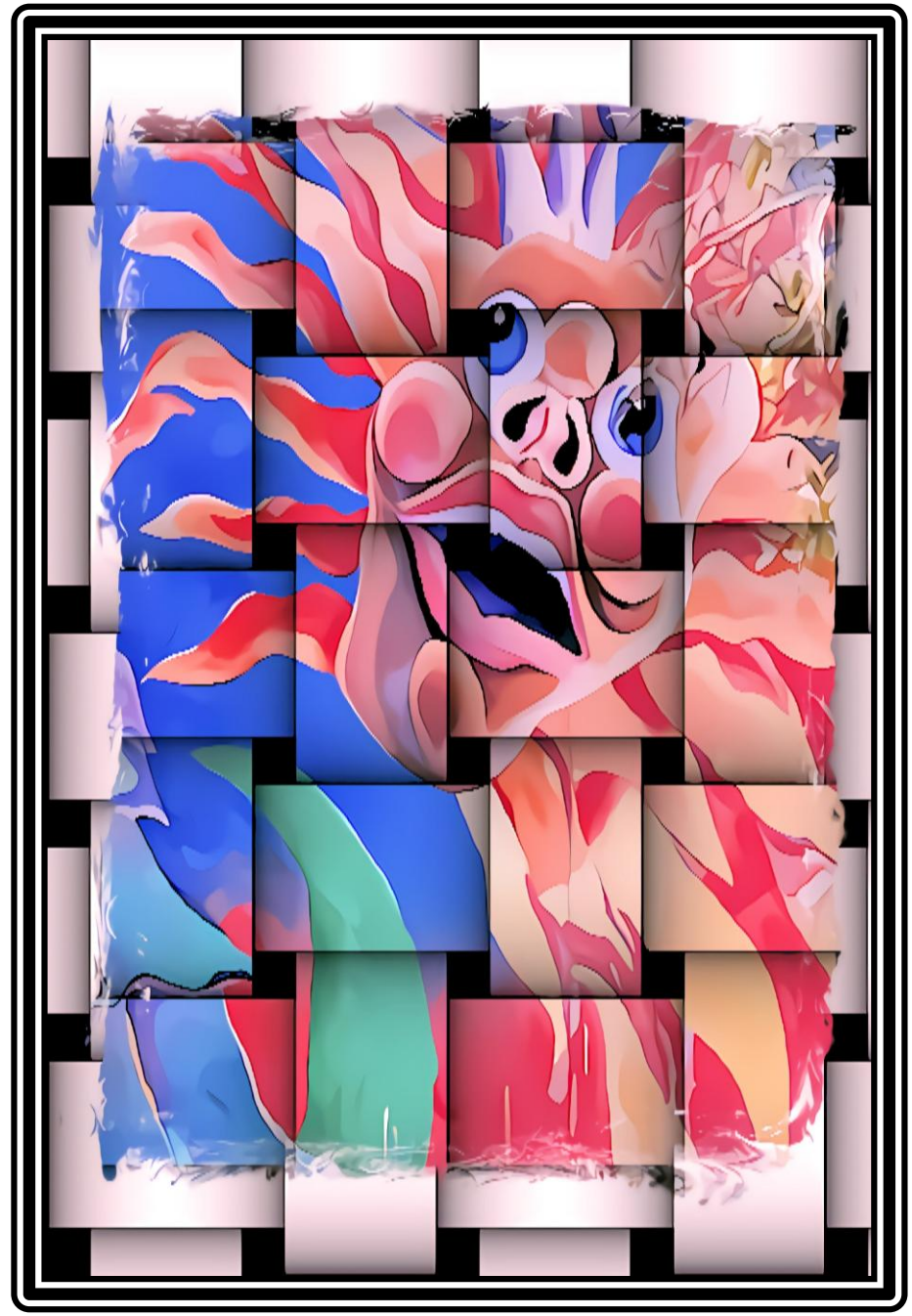
from self-proclaimed experts on YouTube.
These tutorials, while well-intentioned, can often cloud your judgment and create unnecessary confusion.
Instead, trust in the simplicity of the journey and focus on the clear signage and helpful staff at the station, ensuring that your trip to Kyoto is as enjoyable and stress-free as it should be.
Once you descend the escalator, you'll find yourself faced with just two tracks, making it essential to know the precise departure time of your train.
I must admit, during my initial attempt,
I arrived a full ten minutes ahead of schedule,
just as the train was preparing to depart.



In a moment of panic, I hurriedly boarded at the last second, only to realize three stops later that I had mistakenly chosen the wrong train.
This experience taught me a valuable lesson about navigating the system—sometimes, you truly learn through trial and error.
Navigating your way back to the airport from Kyoto can be a remarkably straightforward experience, thanks in large part to the comprehensive signage at Kyoto Station especially, if done during normal business hours.
The station boasts an impressive array of labels in multiple languages, ensuring that travelers from around the globe can find their way with minimal confusion.

This thoughtful approach not only enhances the travel experience but also alleviates the burden on staff who might otherwise be inundated with requests for help from lost tourists.
By prioritizing clear communication and accessibility, Kyoto Station effectively minimizes the stress often associated with travel, allowing visitors to focus on enjoying their journey rather than worrying about logistics.
The challenge arises from the fact that numerous budget flights departing from Japan are scheduled for the early morning hours, specifically between 8 and 9 AM.
Unfortunately, this timing poses a significant logistical issue for travelers coming from Kyoto.





The first JR train leaves at approximately 5:30 AM, and while the journey to the airport takes around 45 minutes, this timeframe is insufficient for passengers to complete essential pre-flight procedures.

By the time travelers account for ticket processing, luggage handling, and immigration checks, they find themselves racing against the clock, often unable to reach their flights on time. This situation highlights the need for better transportation options or more flexible flight schedules to accommodate those relying on public transit from Kyoto.

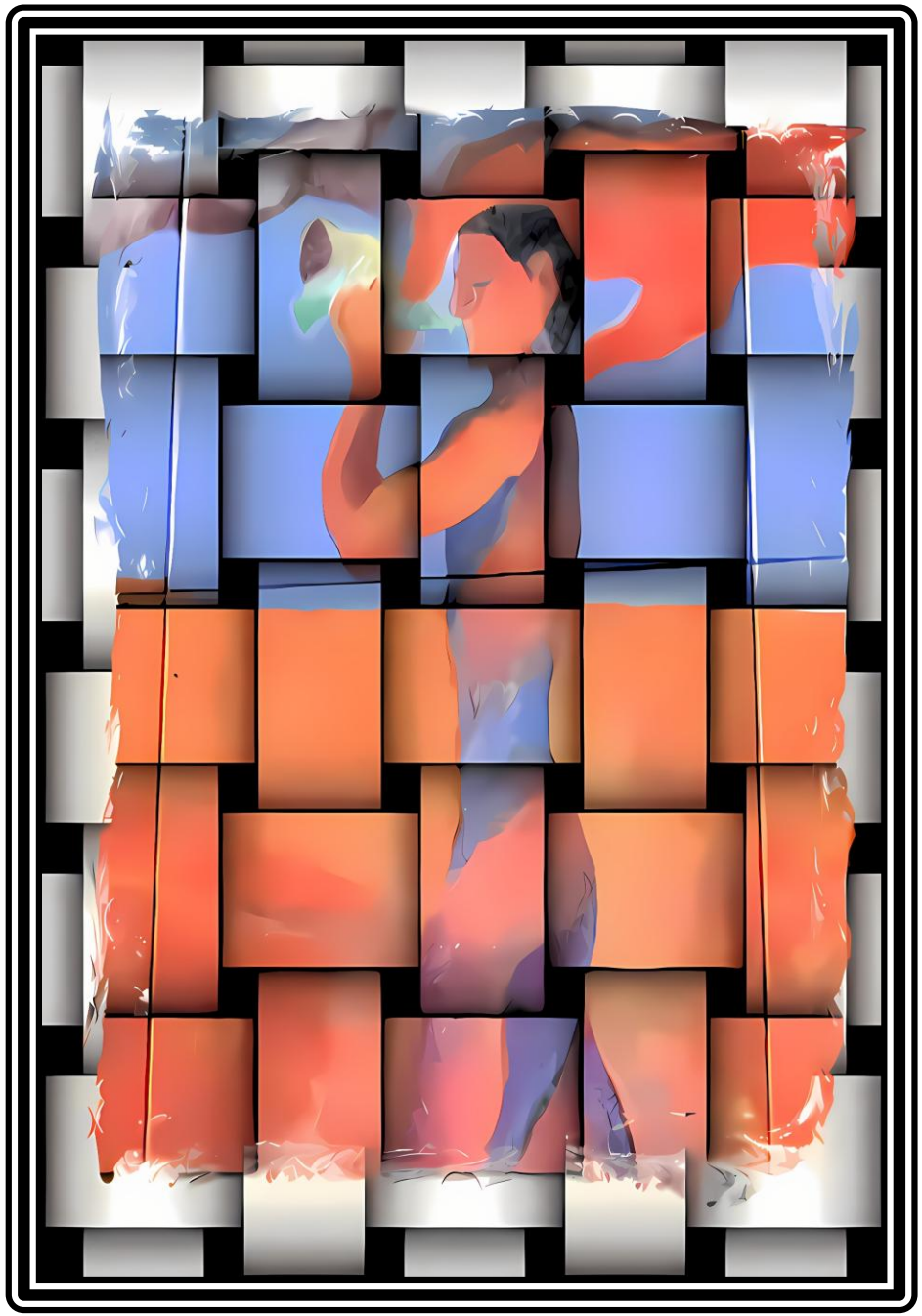
While there is an expensive limo bus that departs earlier from Kyoto Station, it still may

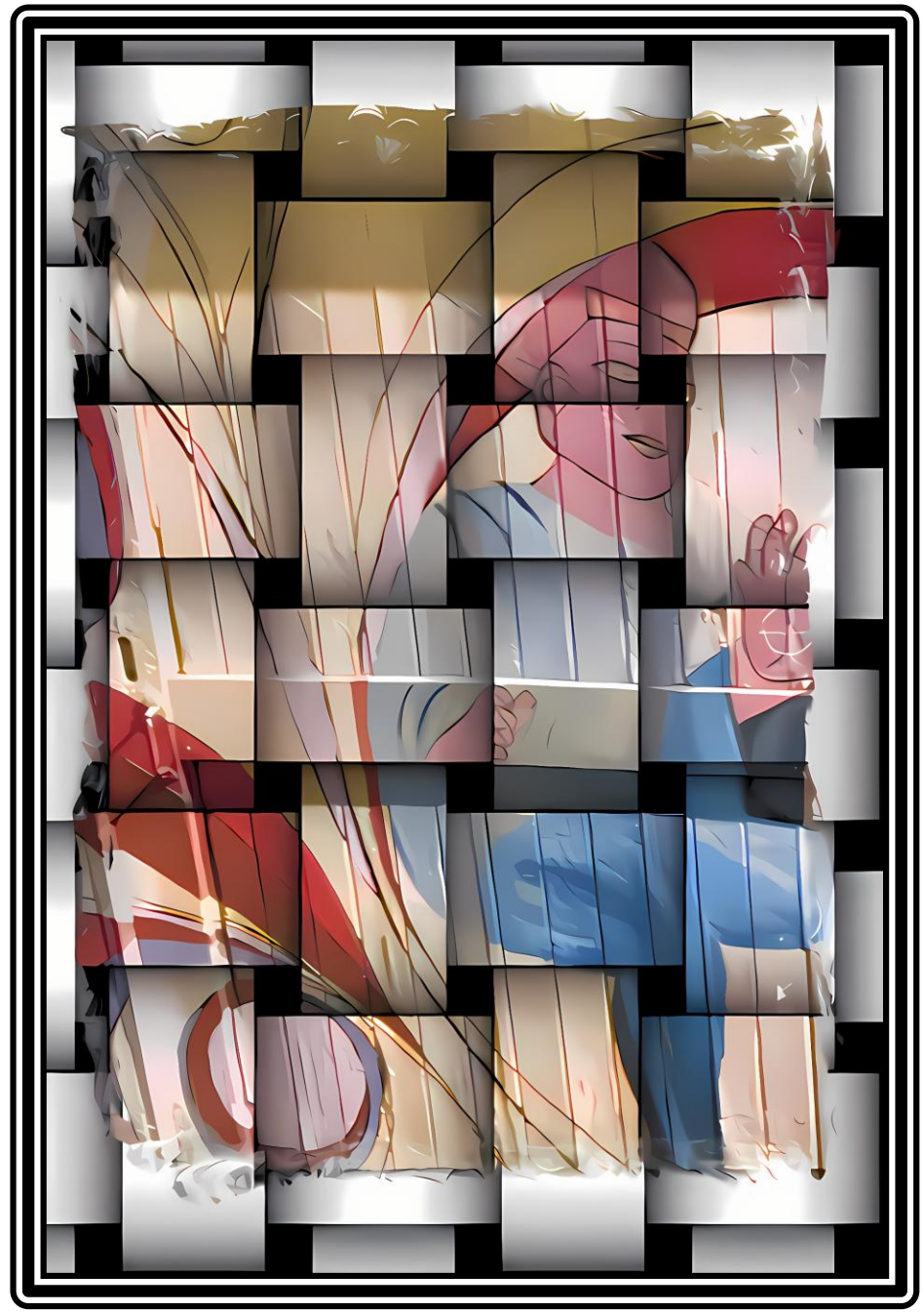
not provide the peace of mind or timely arrival that many travelers seek.

For those who can afford it, such as affluent individuals, trust fund beneficiaries, or members of the political and social elite, the option of a taxi is available, albeit at a steep price of around $300 or more.

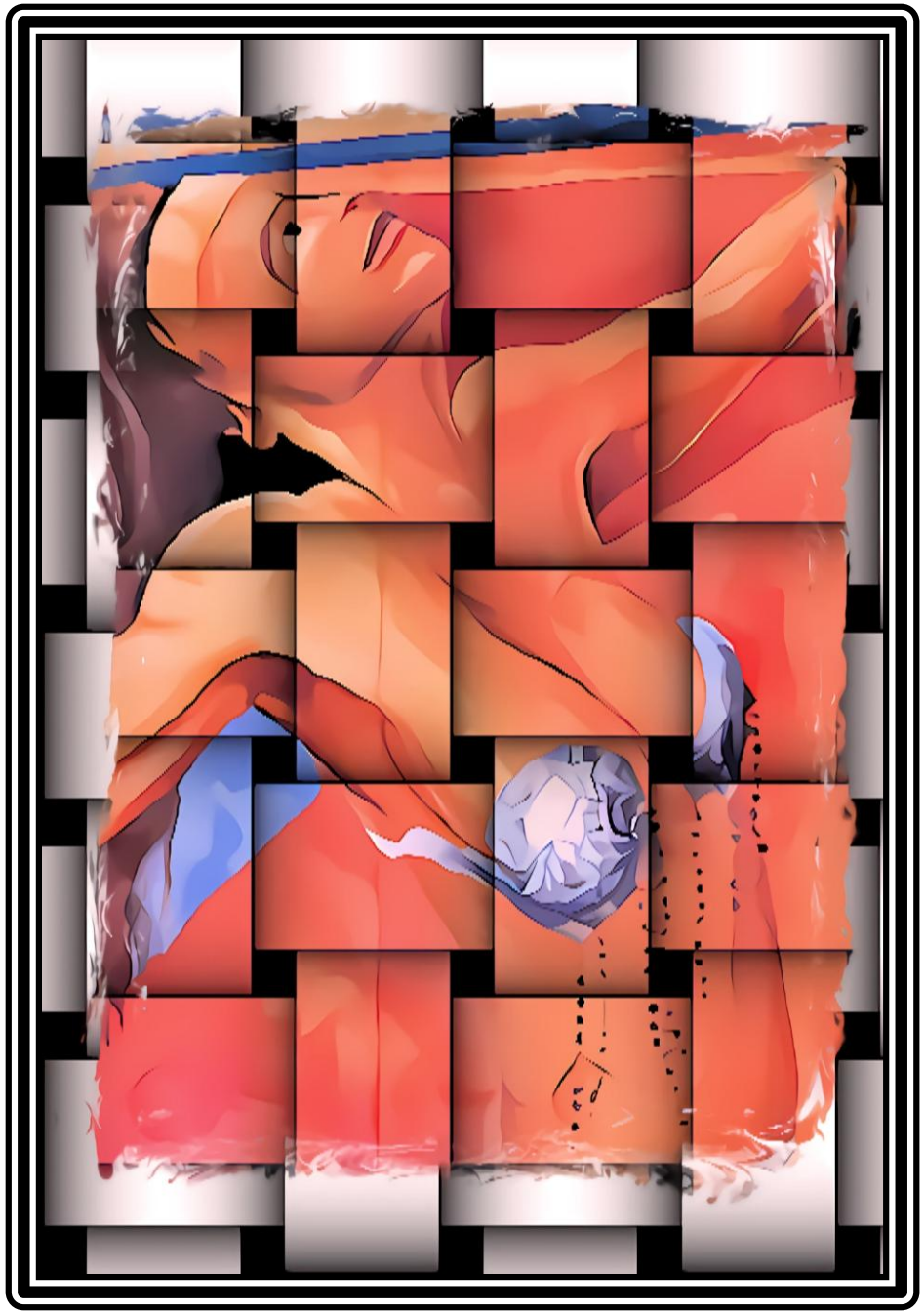
This choice, while convenient, underscores the reality that for most travelers, relying on public transport or shared services can lead to unnecessary stress and uncertainty, especially when time is of the essence.

Therefore, if you value a smooth and timely journey, it may be worth considering alternatives that prioritize both comfort and reliability, rather



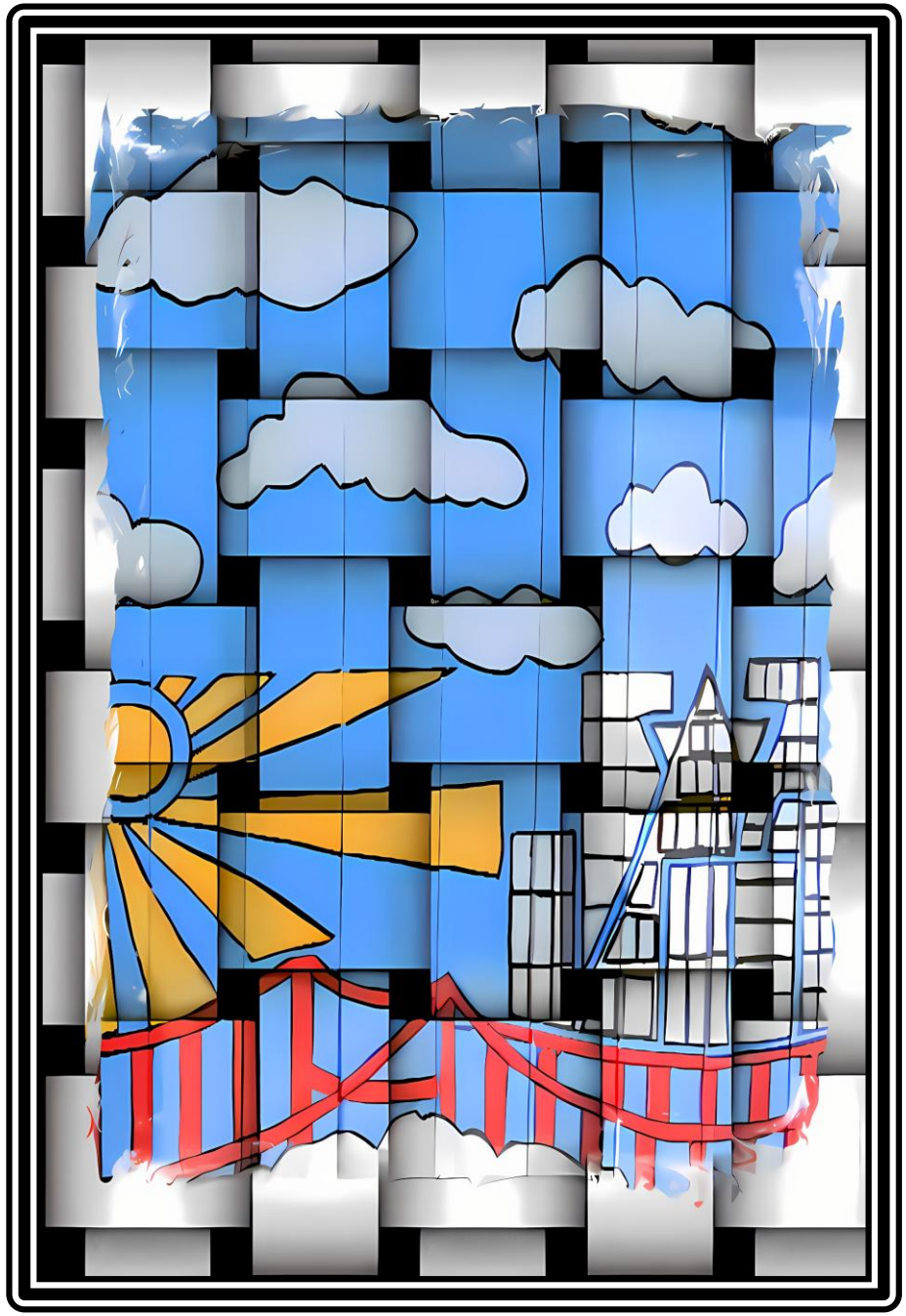


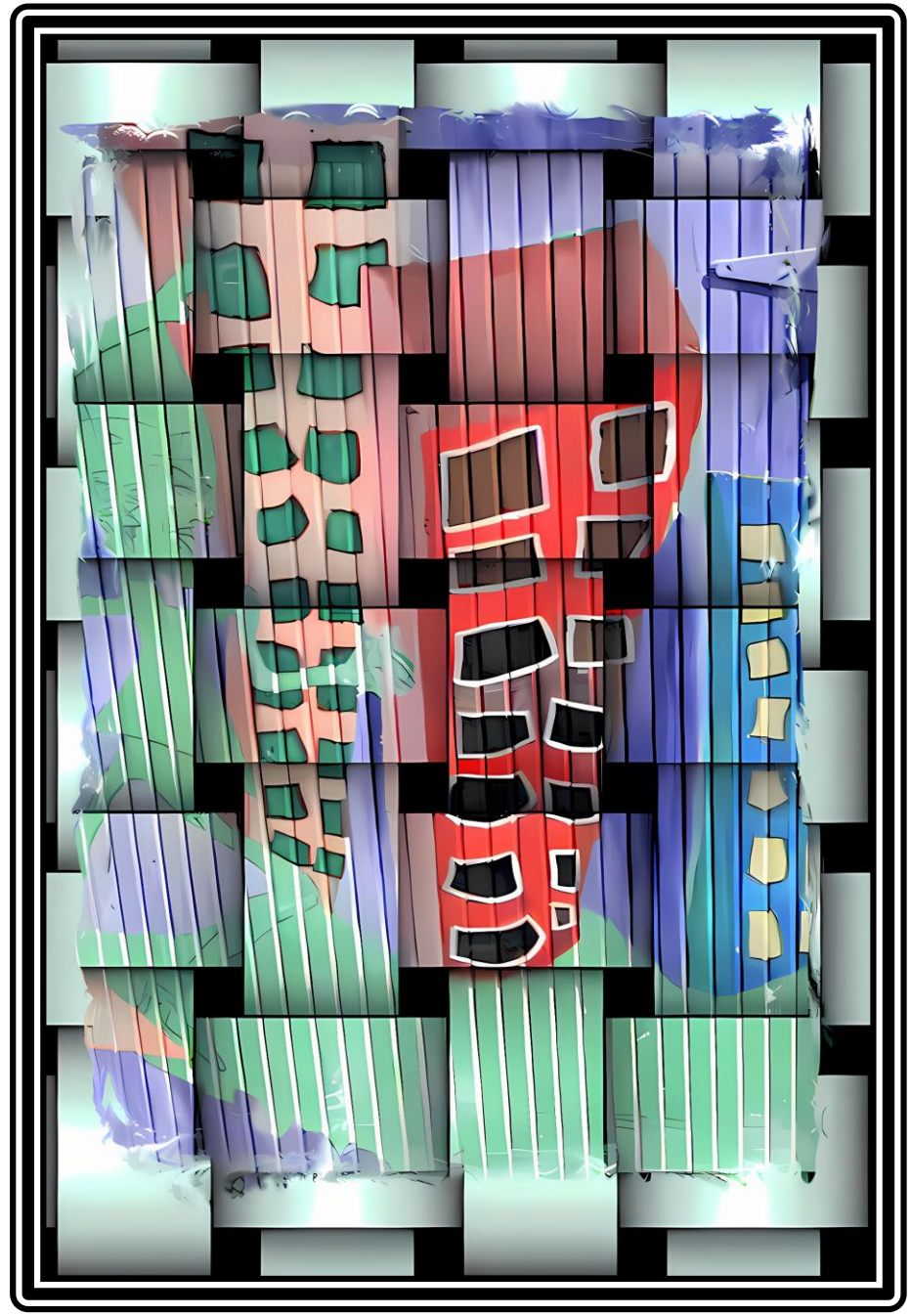
than risking a last-minute scramble.
I found myself in an unexpected situation when I received a frantic call from my hotel neighbor, who had just missed her budget flight—one that was non-refundable, leaving her in quite a bind. She was stranded and desperately sought a place to stay for a few days until her family could send her money via Western Union.
While I felt a strong urge to help her, I was also hesitant to simply say "Yes" without considering the implications.
Nevertheless, I felt compelled to assist, so I offered to speak with the hotel manager on her behalf.
I expressed my concern about her predicament,



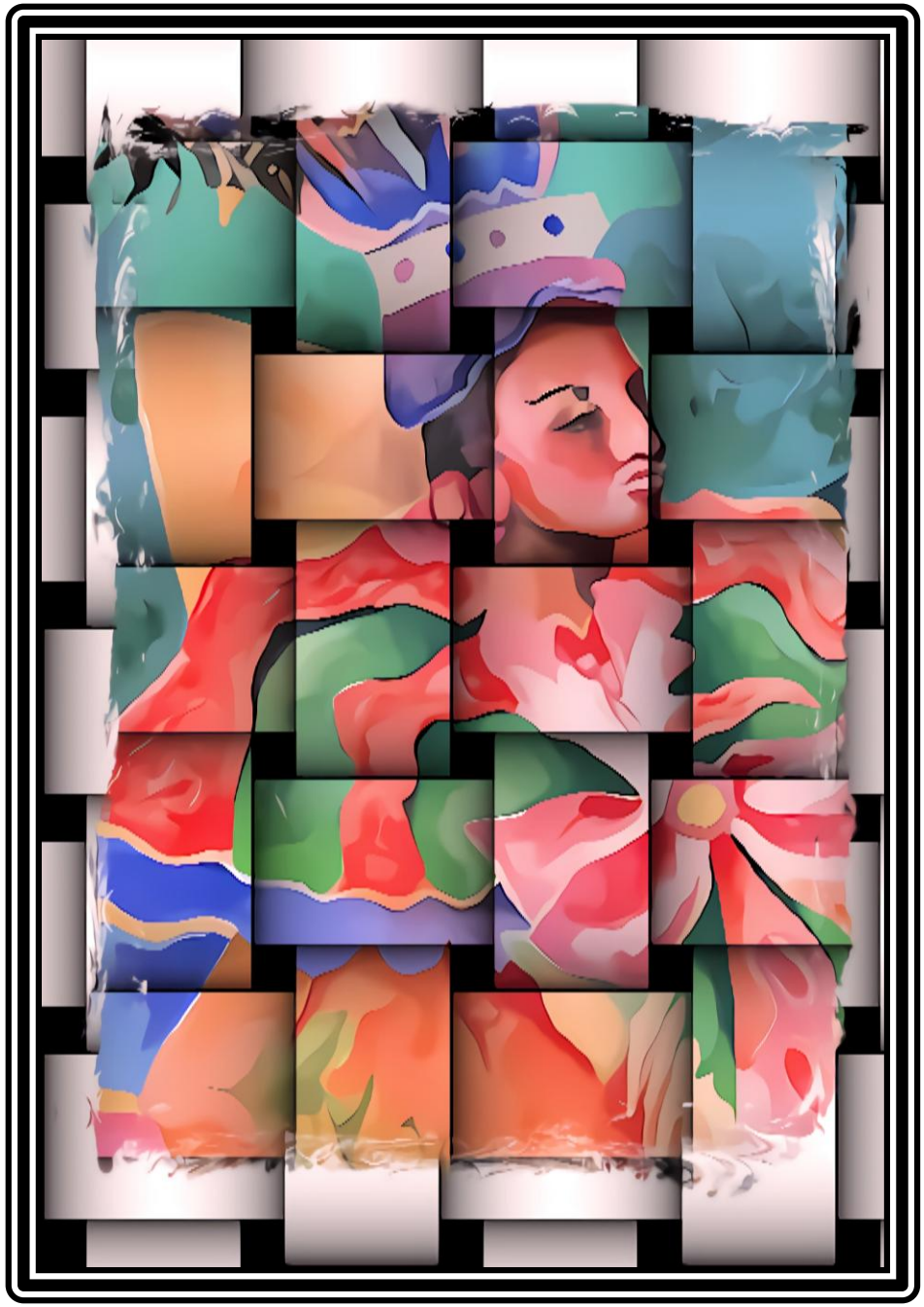
particularly since I wasn't entirely sure if there were any Western Union offices available in Japan, which could complicate her situation further.
It was a delicate balance between wanting to help a fellow traveler in distress and navigating the uncertainties of her financial predicament.
I had taken the time to plan ahead, fully aware of the importance of being punctual.
The final direct train of the evening was scheduled to depart at 8:30 PM, and I made it a point to arrive well in advance.
The Youbee-Tubee Gurus I had been following had consistently emphasized the necessity of early arrival, warning that the train could be quite crowded.

AHowever, to my surprise, when I boarded, I found the carriage almost empty, allowing me to settle in comfortably and enjoy the journey without the stress of a bustling crowd.
The JR Express Train features reserved seating, typically located at the front, and these premium spots come with a hefty price tag that can be daunting for those traveling on a tight budget. However, there's no need to worry. A savvy traveler can simply head towards the rear of the train, where the less expensive seats are usually found.
The reality is that passengers in the budget-friendly sections will board the train around the same time as those in the more luxurious reserved seats.





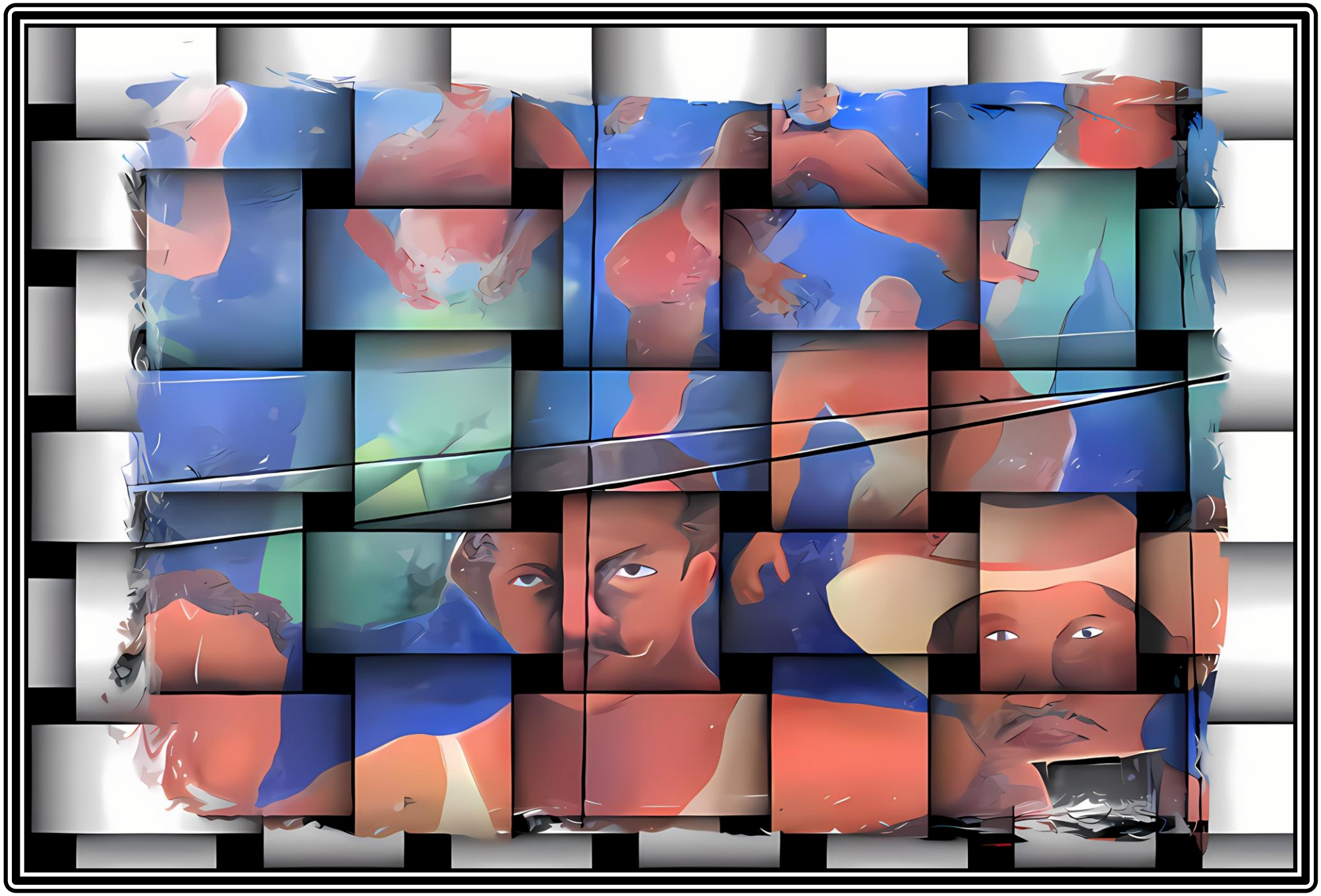
This means that with a little common sense and strategic planning, you can save your hard-earned money while still enjoying the journey.
Even if you're not an experienced hobo traveler, it's clear that opting for the cheaper seats is a smart choice that allows you to stretch your travel funds further.
As fate would have it, I found myself in a prime seat with a window view, which, considering the early hour of our departure, seemed somewhat unnecessary.
I quickly stowed my luggage in the front rack and rushed back to my seat, relieved to discover it was still available. Yes! It felt reminiscent of my experiences in Japan, where order and tranquility reign.



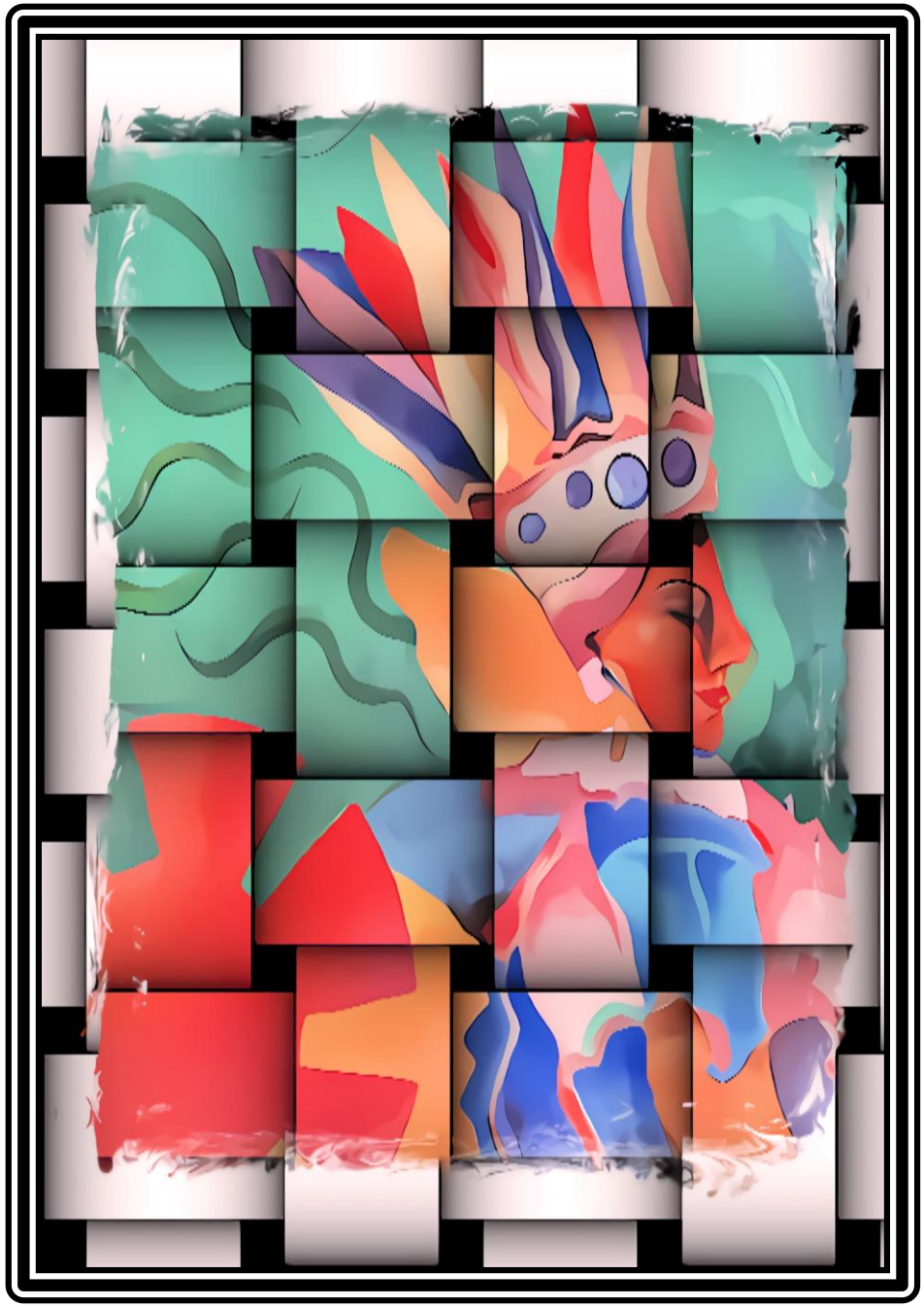
The joy of having a spacious seat all to myself was palpable—absolutely perfect! I was spared from engaging in tedious conversations with seasoned international backpackers seeking spare change for a quick meal at FamilyMart or with bewildered tourists from Disney, desperately trying to ascertain if this was indeed the train to Osaka.

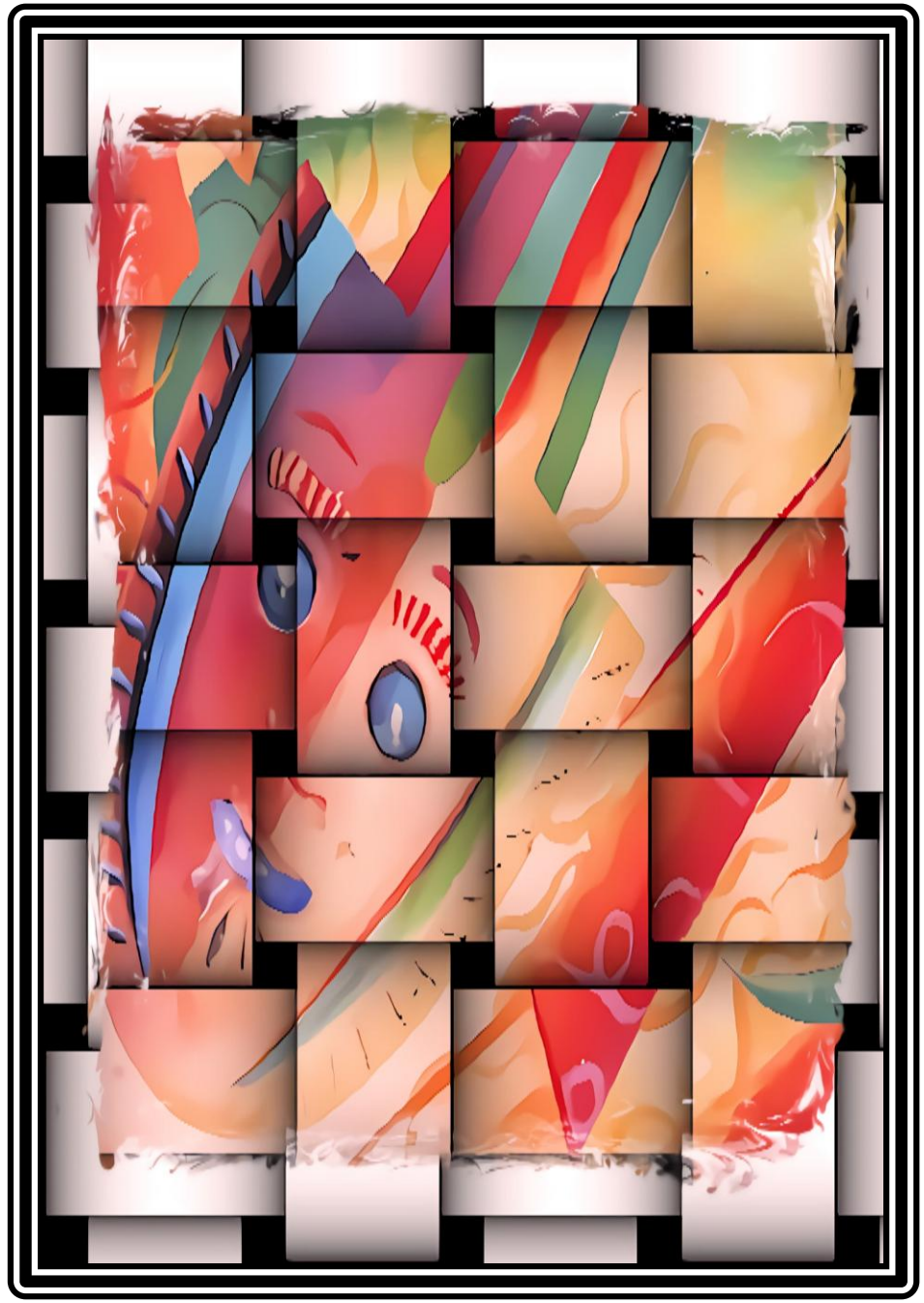
This moment of solitude was a welcome reprieve, allowing me to savor the journey ahead without distractions.

As I settled into my seat, anticipating a serene and uneventful journey to the airport, my tranquility was abruptly shattered by the entrance of three elderly Chinese men.



They boarded the plane with an unsteady gait, their presence marked by a potent aroma that seemed to be a blend of stale sake and an indeterminate number of beer chasers.
Two of them plopped down in the row opposite me, and I thought to myself, "No problem," as I considered my status as a seasoned traveler and a proud member of the Hobo International Union, despite my inability to speak Chinese.
However, just as I began to relax, fate decided to intervene dramatically; the third man lingered in the aisle, casting a curious gaze down at me, his expression unreadable and the air thick with an unexpected tension that made my heart race.
I was on the verge of becoming irritated by his



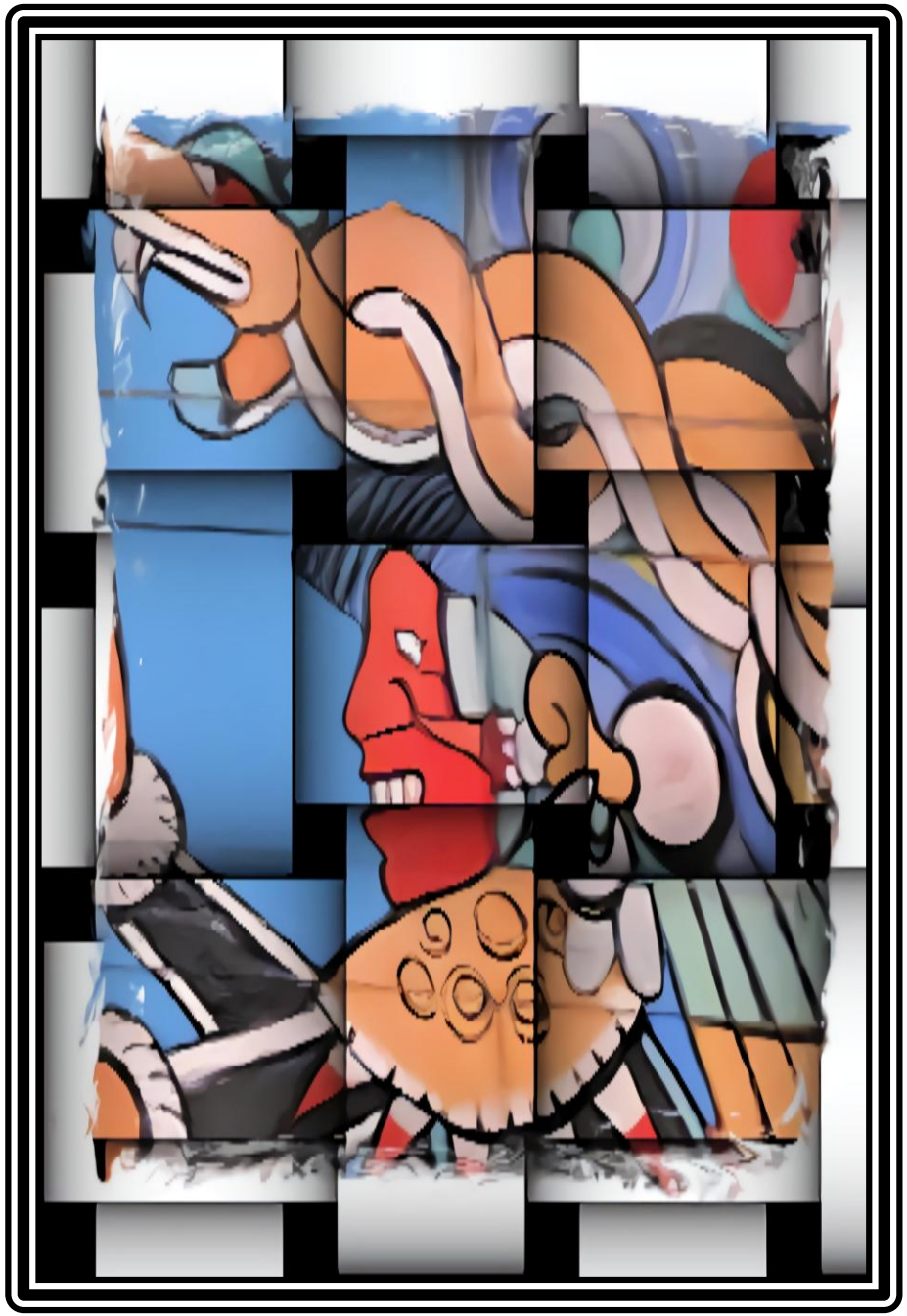


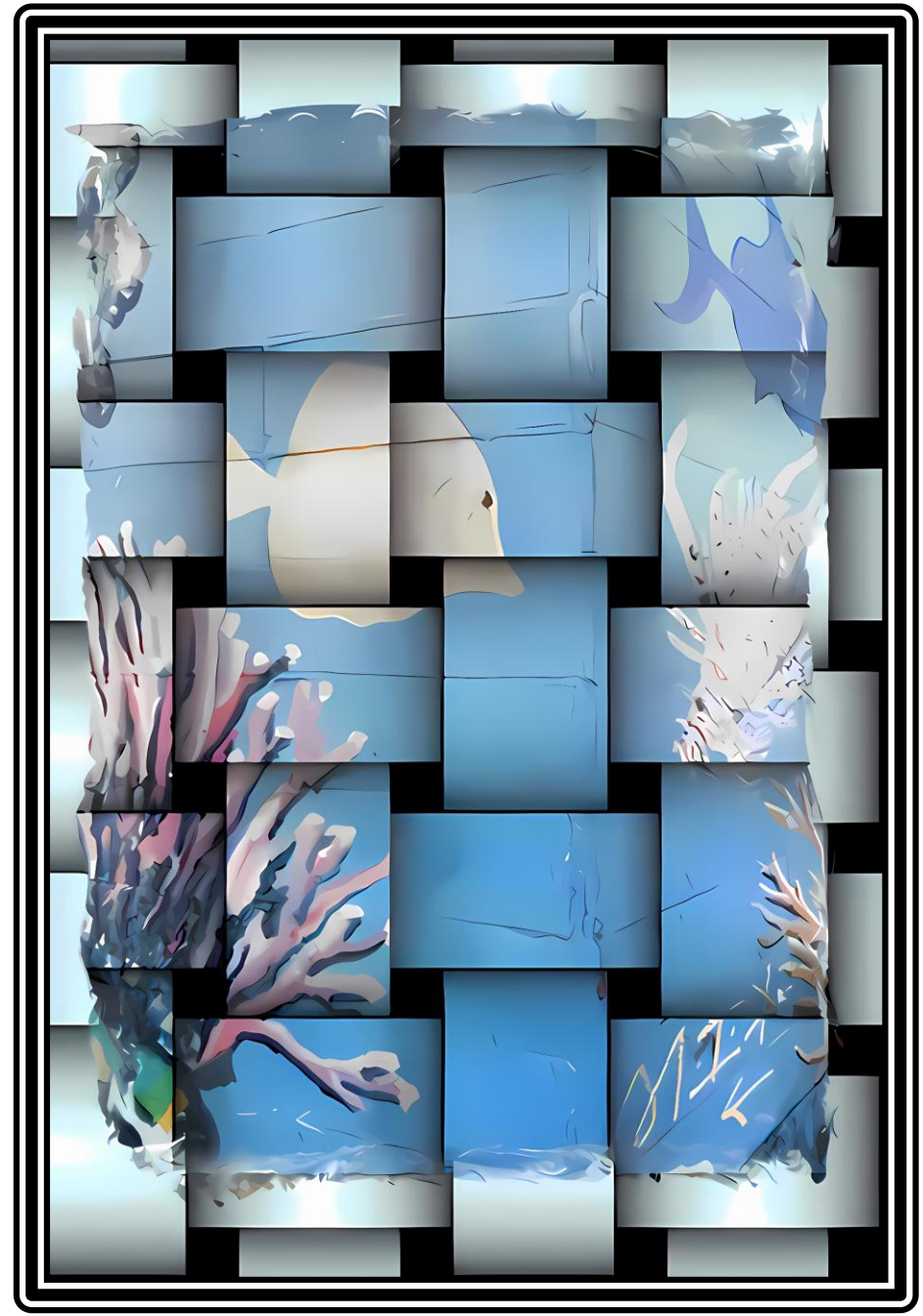
selfish and rude attempt to assert his presence in what was supposed to be a tranquil journey. Throughout our encounter, he never mentioned that I was occupying his seat; had he done so, I would have willingly relocated, especially since the train car was nearly empty.

Fortunately for him, I was interrupted by a phone call, and before I could address his discourteous behavior, he disappeared.

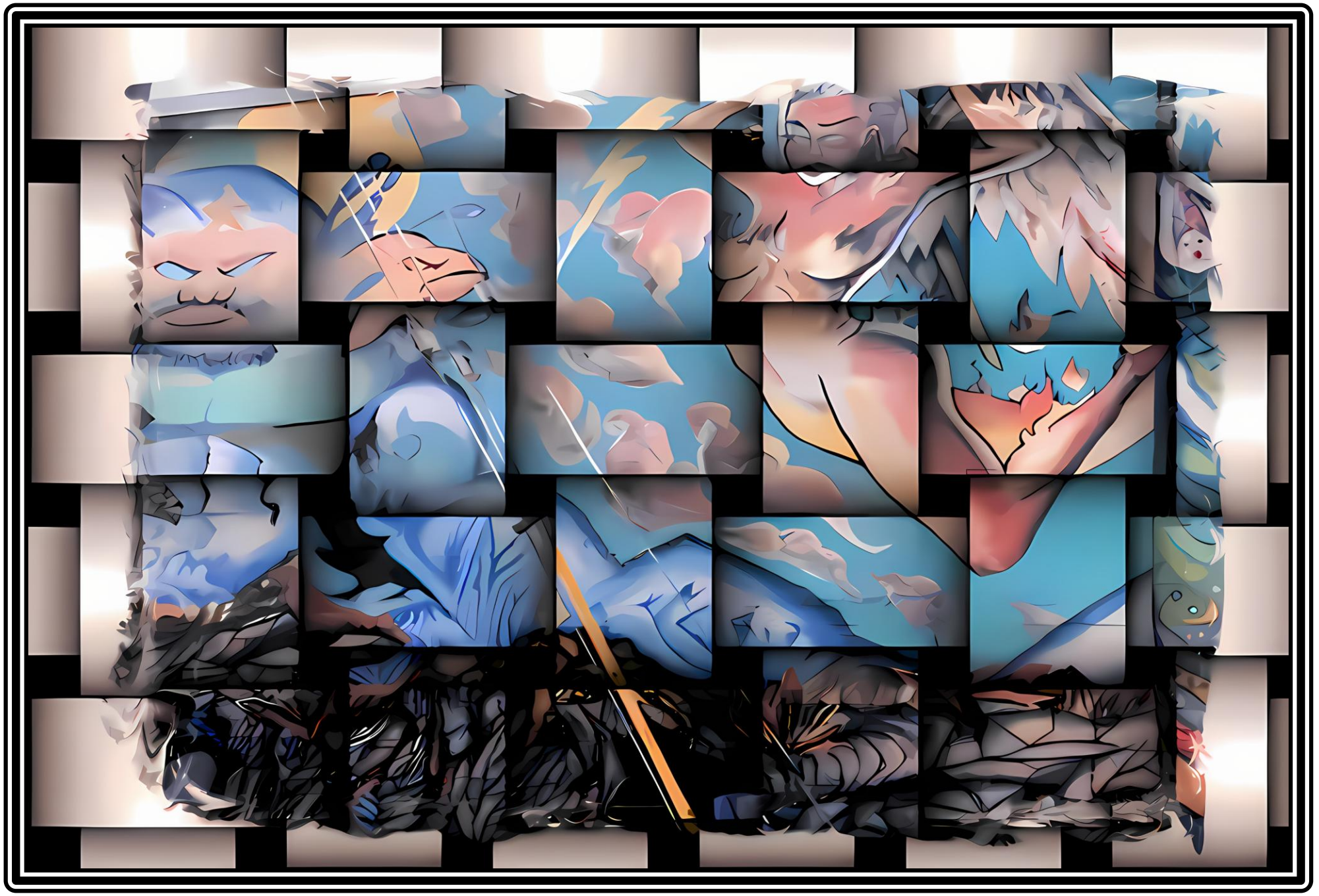
I felt a sense of relief wash over me, as the last thing I wanted was to create a scene or engage in a dramatic showdown reminiscent of a Steven Seagal movie on a moving train.

Being a foreigner, I was acutely aware that any confrontation would likely paint me as the villain, risking expulsion from the train and





leaving me with no choice but to trek the remaining distance to the airport on foot.
Moments later, I noticed him making his way back down the aisle, his voice raised in a fervent mix of Shanghai English and Chinese as he berated the conductor accompanying him.
It was clear that he was quite agitated, passionately asserting that I had committed a serious offense—what he described as a serious hate crime, although the actual translation was "sin"—by refusing to give up my seat for him.
This encounter felt emblematic of the pervasive influence of WOKE culture that seems to permeate every aspect of society these days.
What struck me as particularly odd was that he never bothered to say something as simple as

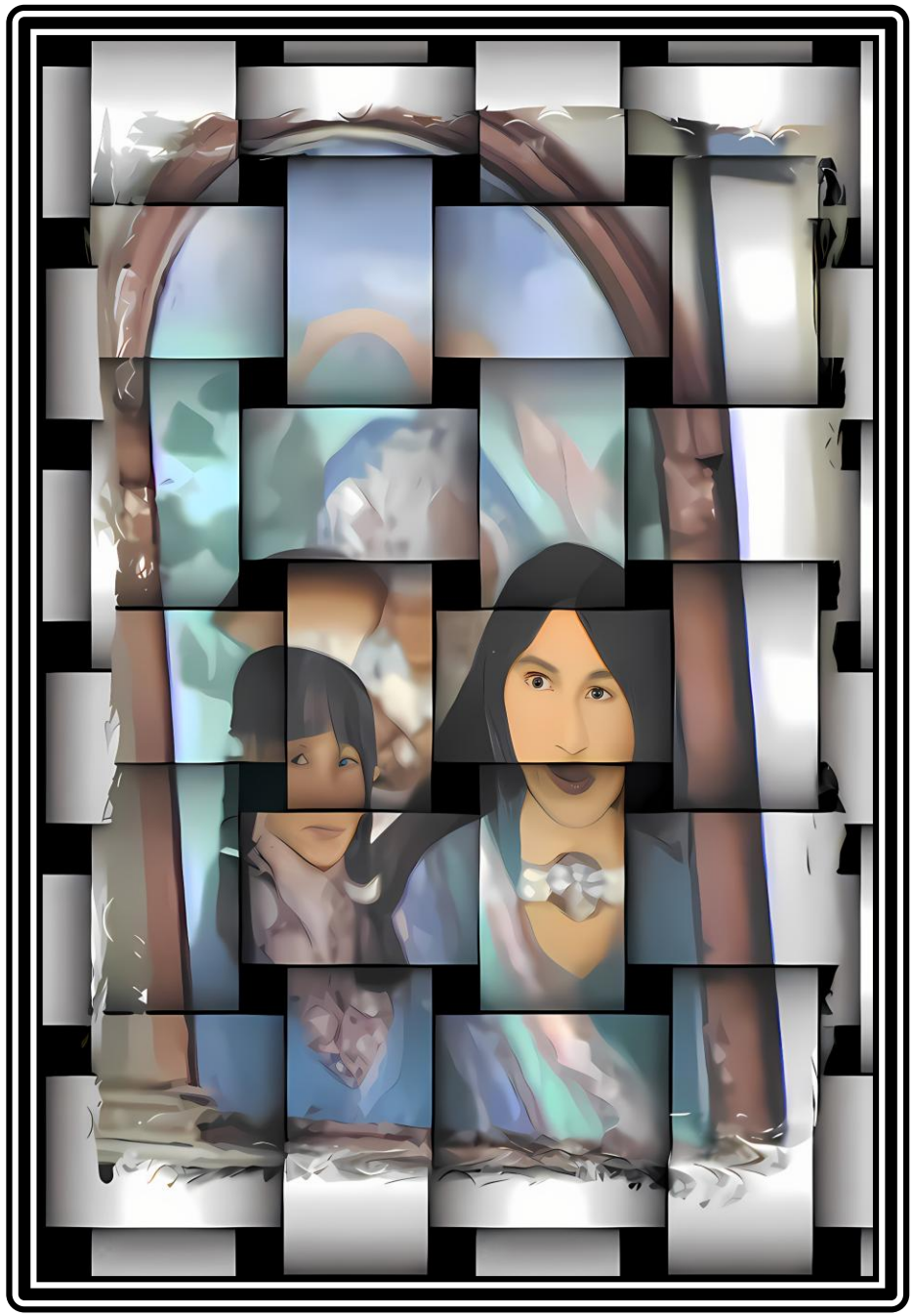


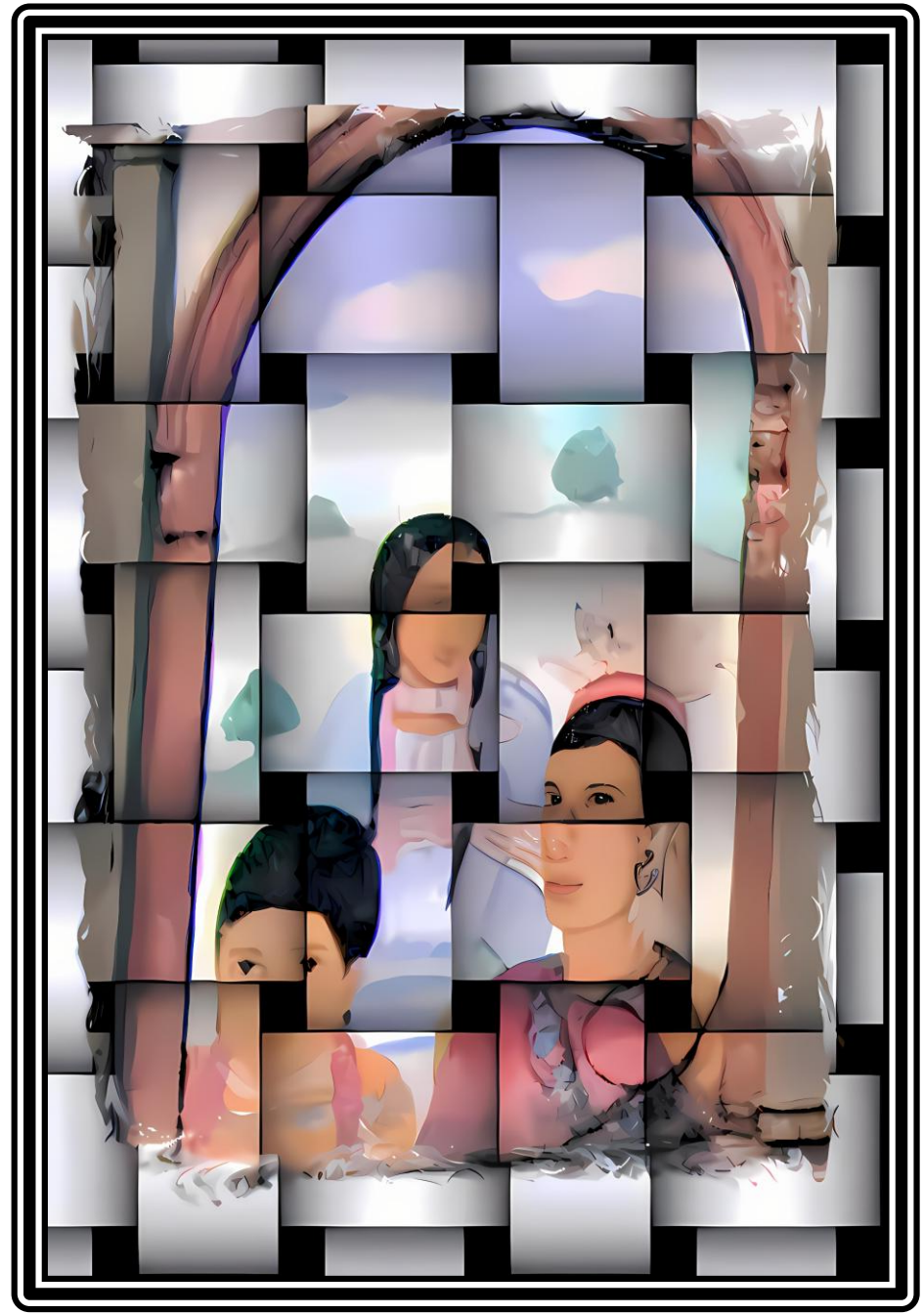
"excuse me" or "you have my seat," instead opting for a dramatic outburst that left me bewildered.

The conductor looked at me with an intensity that suggested he believed I was some sort of malevolent foreign intruder, a genuine disruptor of peace on his train.

His voice, laced with the unmistakable firmness characteristic of older Japanese men when they are displeased, cut through the air as he demanded, "Ticket...PLEASE!"

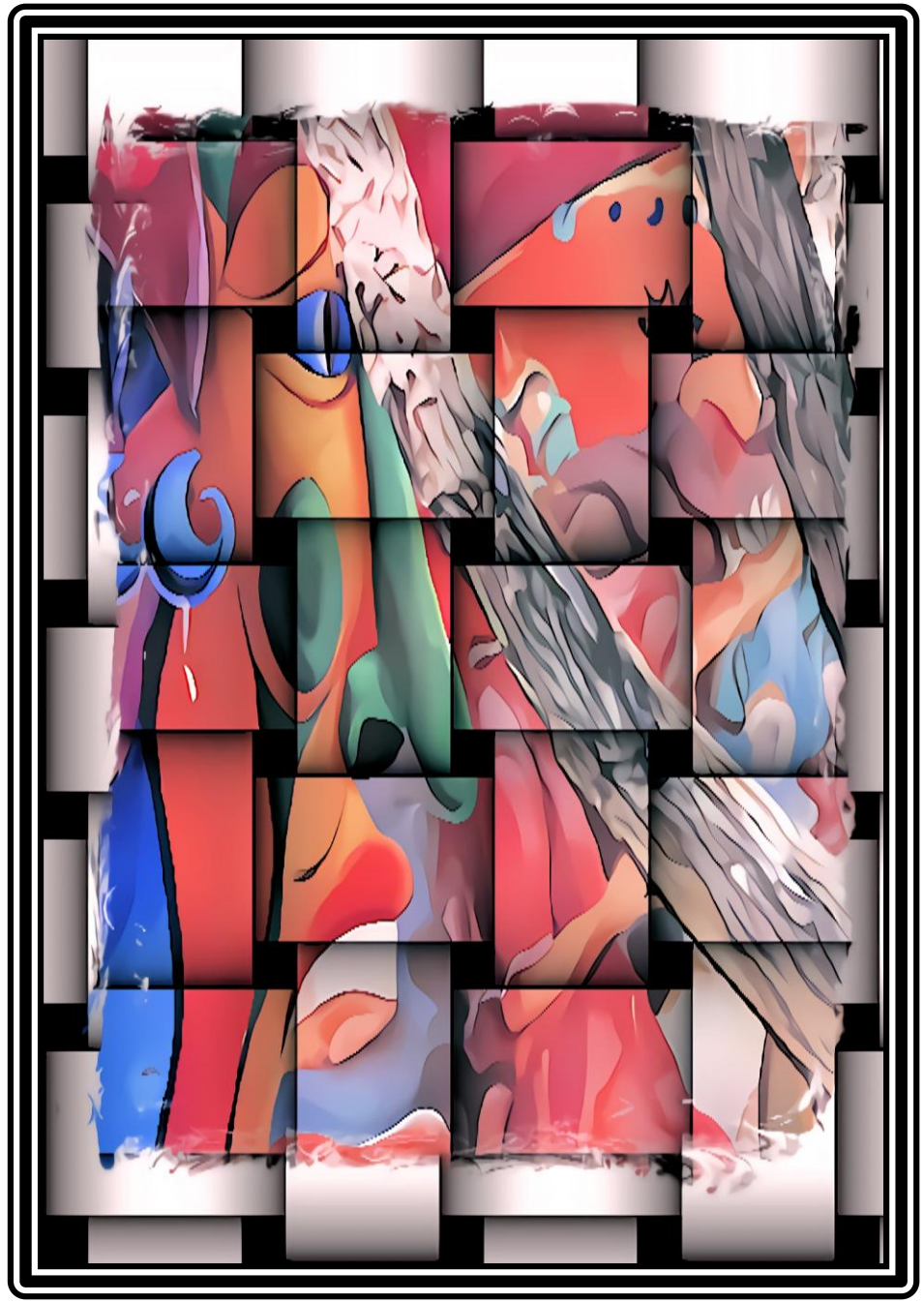
After scrutinizing my ticket for what felt like an eternity, he reprimanded me with a blend of politeness and authority, informing me that despite my location at the back of the train, I was occupying a reserved car.





With a tone that was both courteous and persistent, he instructed me to vacate my seat and relocate to the less expensive section, making way for a proper Chinese businessman who deserved the spot I had unwittingly claimed. As the train rumbles along its tracks, the task of gathering my belongings and relocating to another car proves to be far more challenging than I had anticipated. I can already hear the disapproving murmurs from those around me, and I must confess that my earlier outburst directed at the conductor was somewhat uncalled for.

In a moment of frustration, I questioned aloud why a seemingly dignified Japanese man would resort to such pettiness in taking the side of a



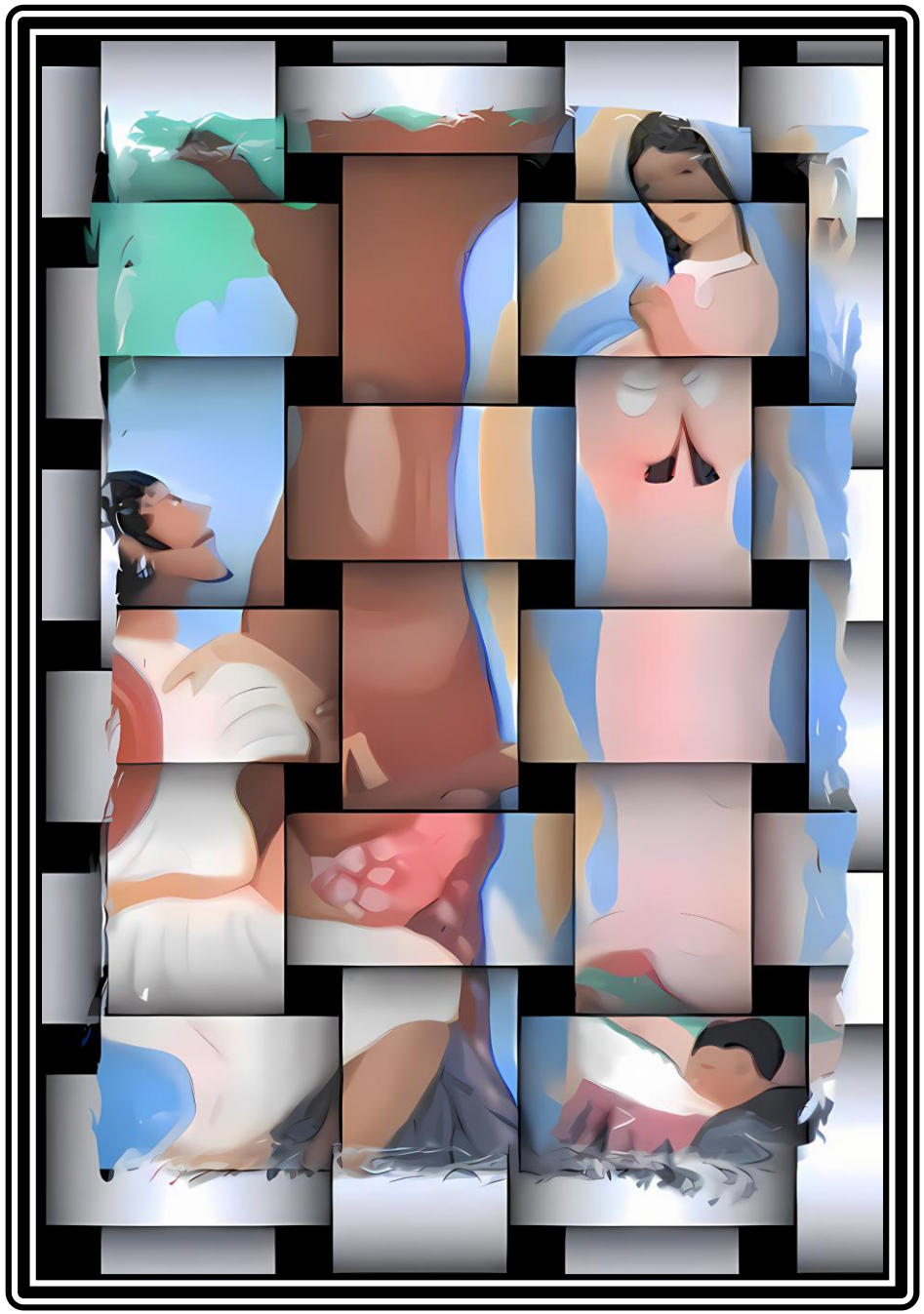
drunken individual from China.
Was my reaction justified?
Perhaps not entirely, but it certainly stemmed from a place of exasperation.
The complexities of human interaction often lead us to act in ways that we later reflect upon with a mix of regret and understanding.
The recent encounter on the nearly vacant train highlighted a troubling aspect of behavior exhibited by some tourists, particularly a boorish individual from Shanghai.
This incident underscores a broader issue regarding the need for improved etiquette among certain Mainland Chinese travelers, who, under the influence of the Chinese Communist

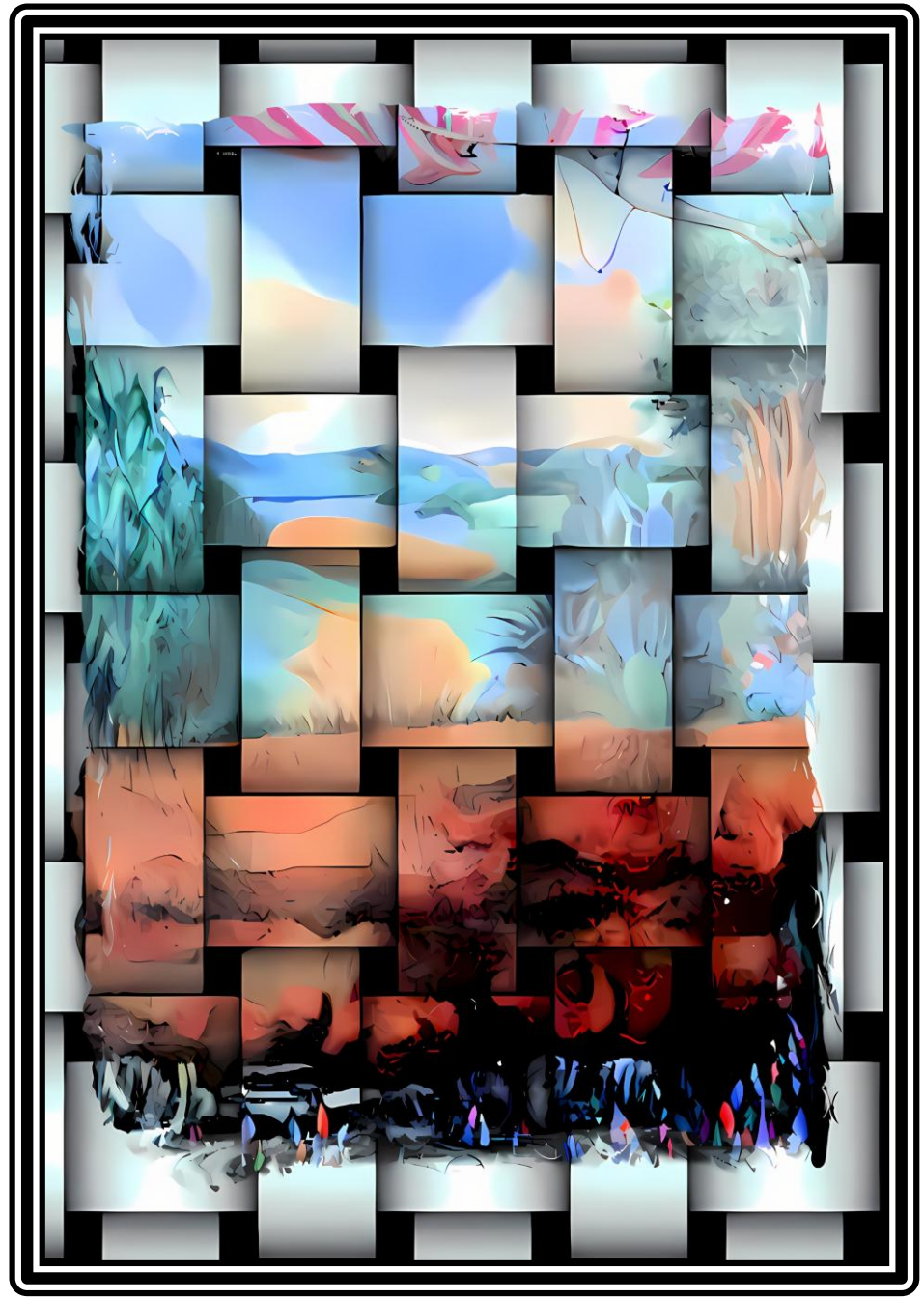
Party, may benefit from a refresher on basic civility.

It is worth noting that this lack of courtesy strongly contrasts with the cultural refinement often associated with our Japanese neighbors, whose post-war experiences under General MacArthur and his administration have significantly shaped their societal norms.

The expectation of mutual respect in international interactions is paramount, and it is essential to recognize that the rude behavior displayed by this Shanghai businessman does not reflect a global dominance; rather, it serves as a reminder that such attitudes are not universally accepted or tolerated.

The world is still governed by principles of respect





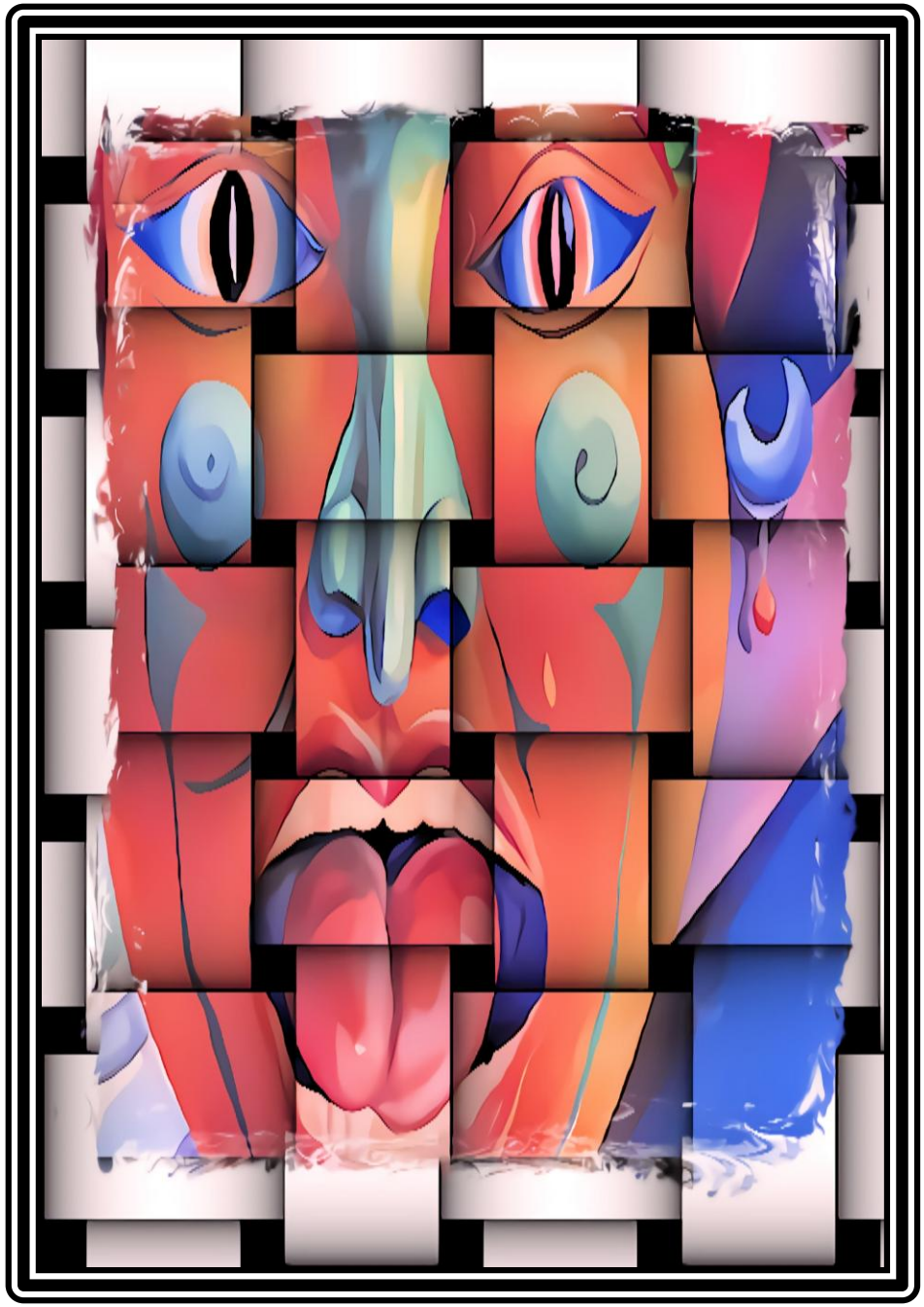
and decency, and it is crucial for all travelers to embrace these values, regardless of their background.

As I arrived at the airport around 10 PM, the scene at the International Departure Terminal was far from welcoming.

All the ticket counters had shut down for the night, leaving only a handful of weary travelers occupying the few available chairs, their expressions a mixture of exhaustion and frustration.

The atmosphere was further disrupted by the local construction crews, who had just begun their nightly work, adding an unwelcome layer of noise and chaos.

To make matters worse, the only open restroom



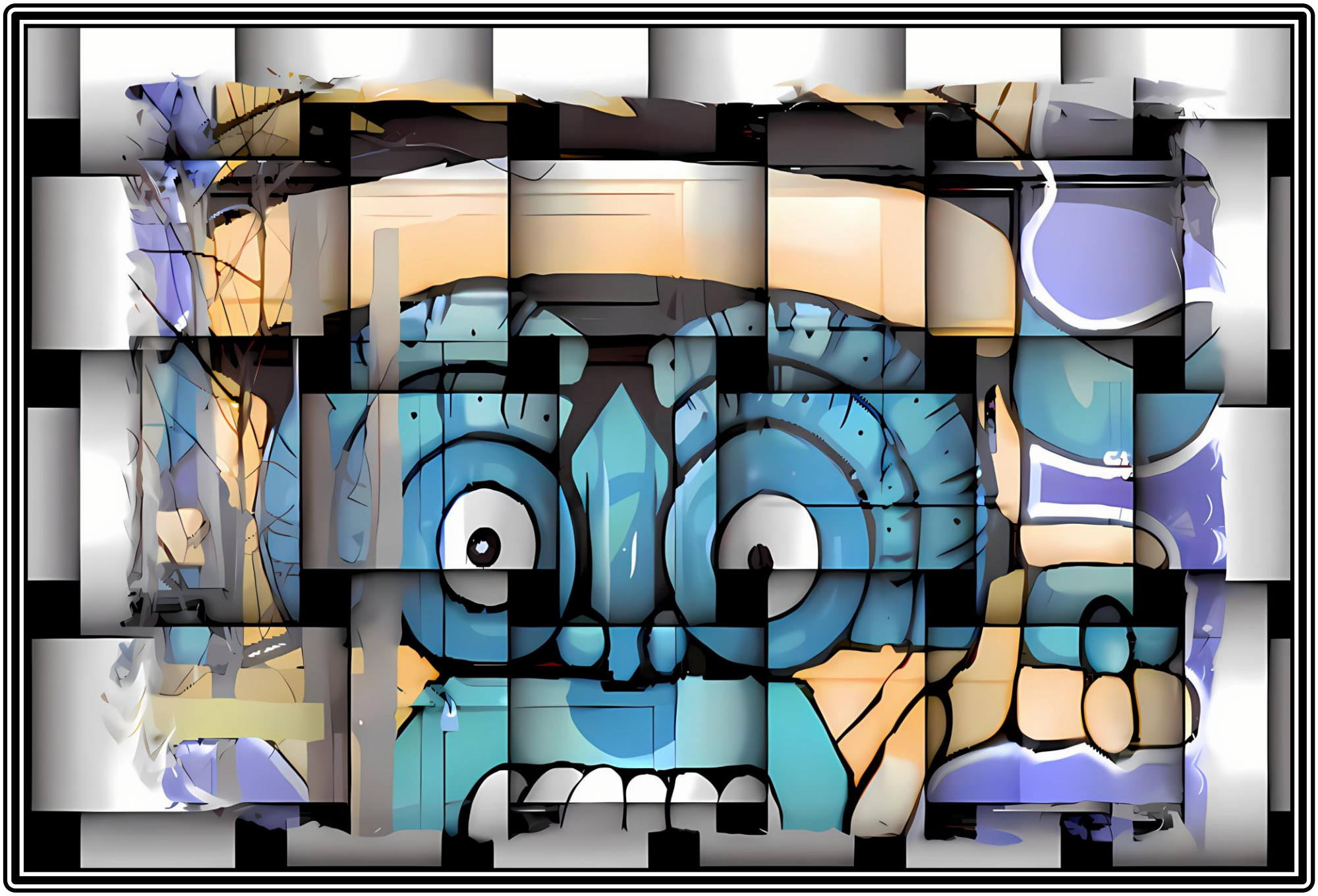
was packed with tourists, many of whom appeared to be feigning illness in a desperate attempt to catch some rest.

After taking in this disheartening tableau, I decided to venture down to the Domestic Terminal, and the contrast was striking.

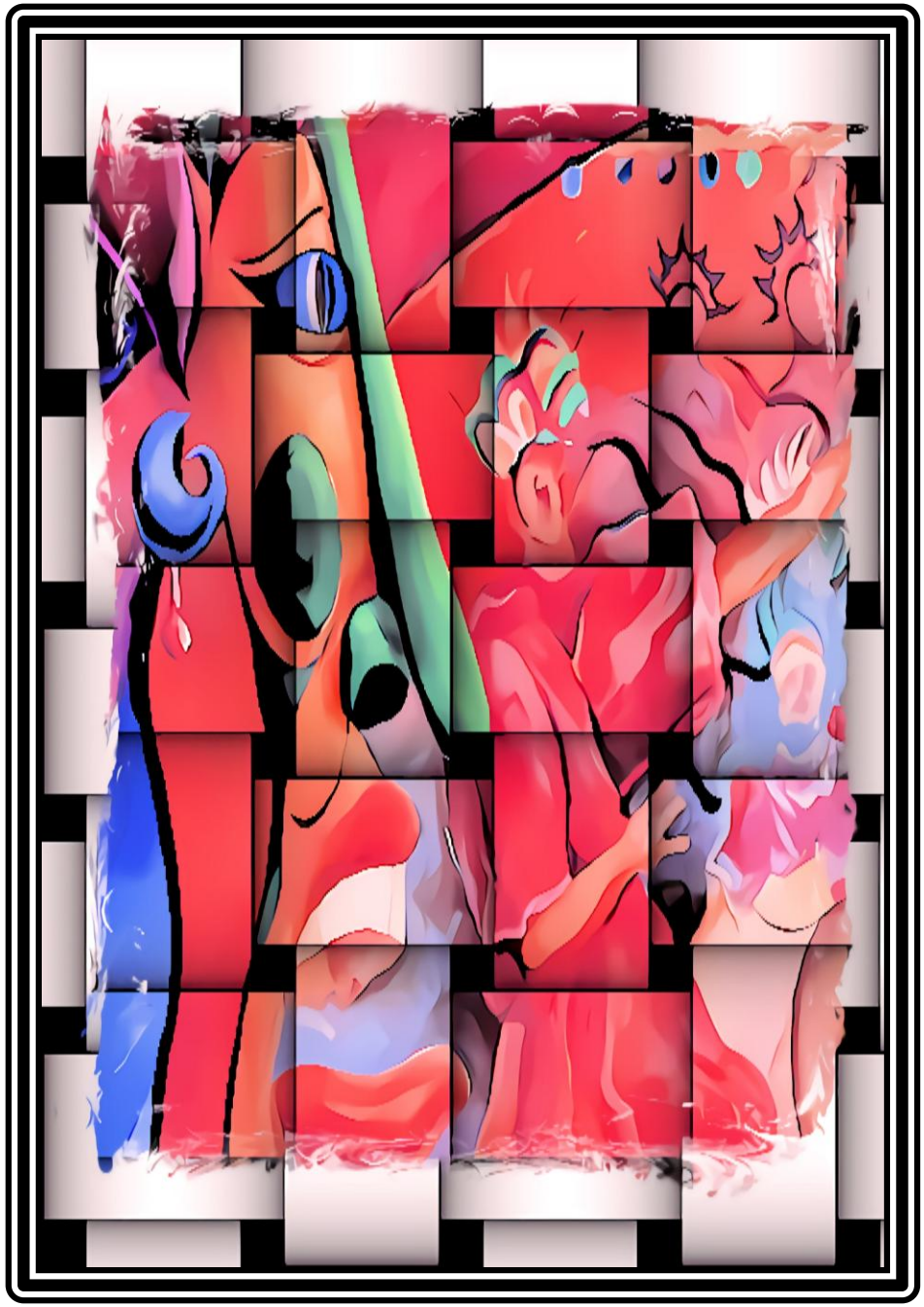
In the Domestic Terminal, a vibrant array of shops and dining options remained open, creating a lively atmosphere despite the late hour.

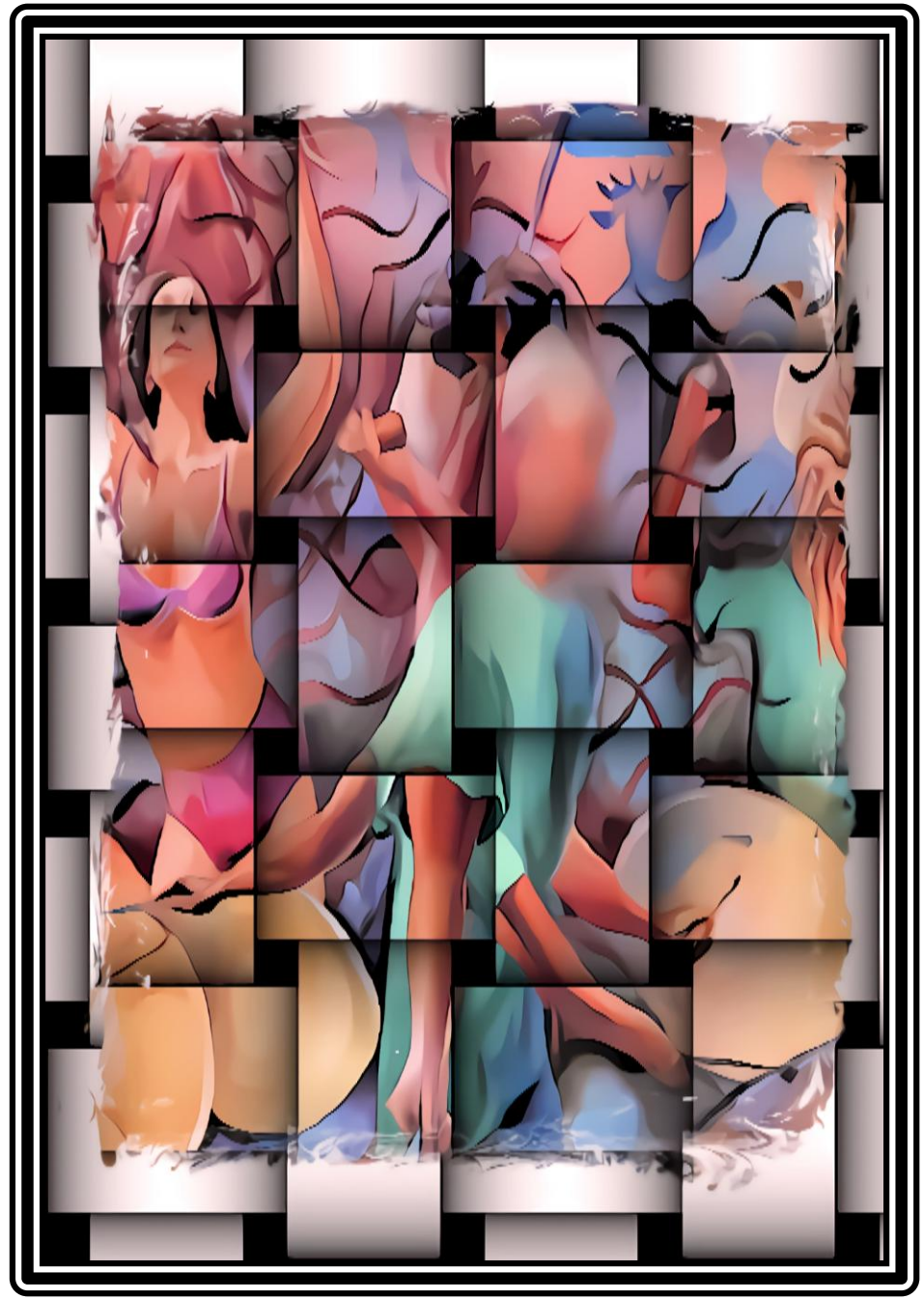
I decided to indulge in a late dinner at a unique establishment that could best be described as a fusion of What-a-Burger and Mister Donut, offering a delightful mix of savory and sweet treats.

The seating area was surprisingly spacious, filled with comfortable chairs that, while eerily vacant,

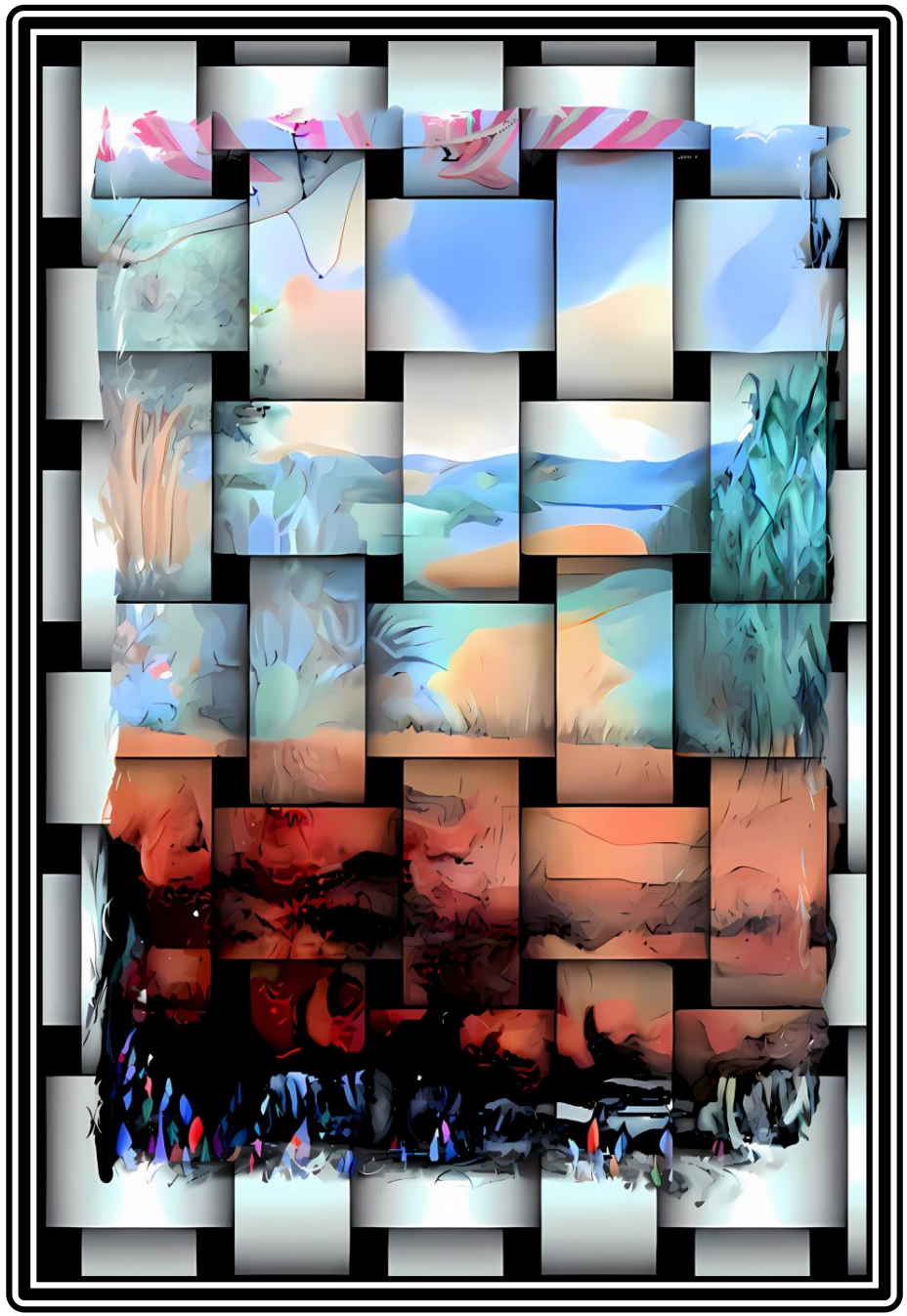


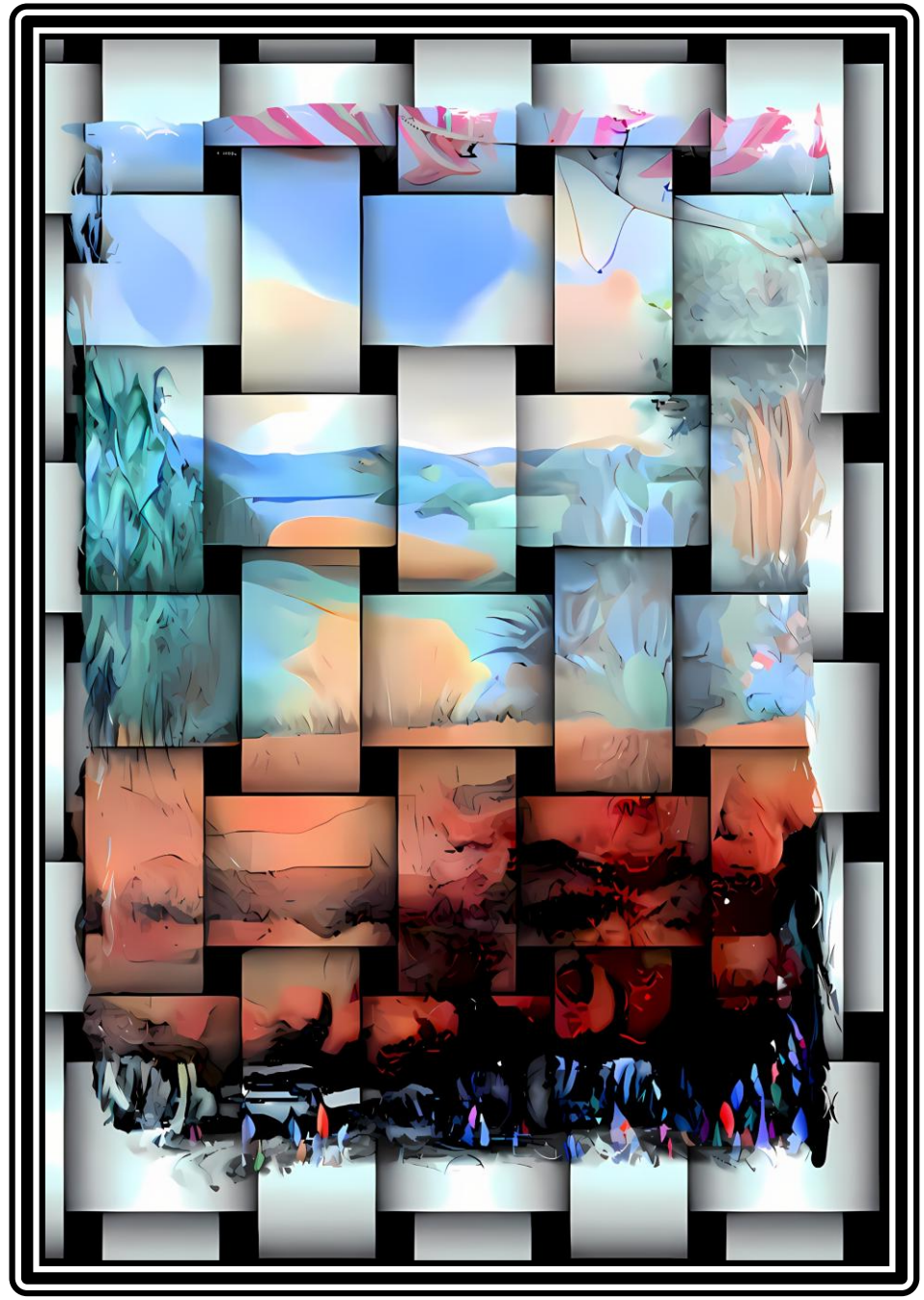
provided a sense of tranquility.
Although I cannot confirm this firsthand, an insider later informed me that the terminal was specifically designed with domestic travelers in mind, particularly catering to the needs of Japanese passengers.
This thoughtful design resulted in a more inviting and comfortable environment compared to the more austere accommodations found in the international terminal, making it a hidden gem for those fortunate enough to pass through.
I found myself in a surprisingly secure place to spend the night, yet an overwhelming urge to keep a vigilant watch over my cameras, computer, and the few possessions I clung to as





a wandering artist and modern-day hobo gnawed at me.
It may seem irrational, especially considering I was in Japan, of all places, and nestled within the Domestic Terminal, but my anxiety stemmed not from the local population.
Instead, it was the presence of a throng of faux-hippie backpackers that had escaped the claustrophobic atmosphere of the International Terminal, their boisterous energy and carefree demeanor making me uneasy.
I couldn't shake the feeling that more than a few of these opportunistic individuals were casting greedy glances at my camera bag, and the thought of dozing off filled me with dread.
I feared that if I let my guard down, I might wake





up to find my equipment gone, or worse, be left vulnerable in a nearby bathroom stall, a victim of their reckless beating.

It later became clear to me that I was not alone in my predicament; a number of other travelers had also found themselves stranded, either lacking the funds or simply unwilling to splurge on a proper room at the airport hotel.

As I sat in the Domestic Terminal, I observed a curious silence enveloping the group.

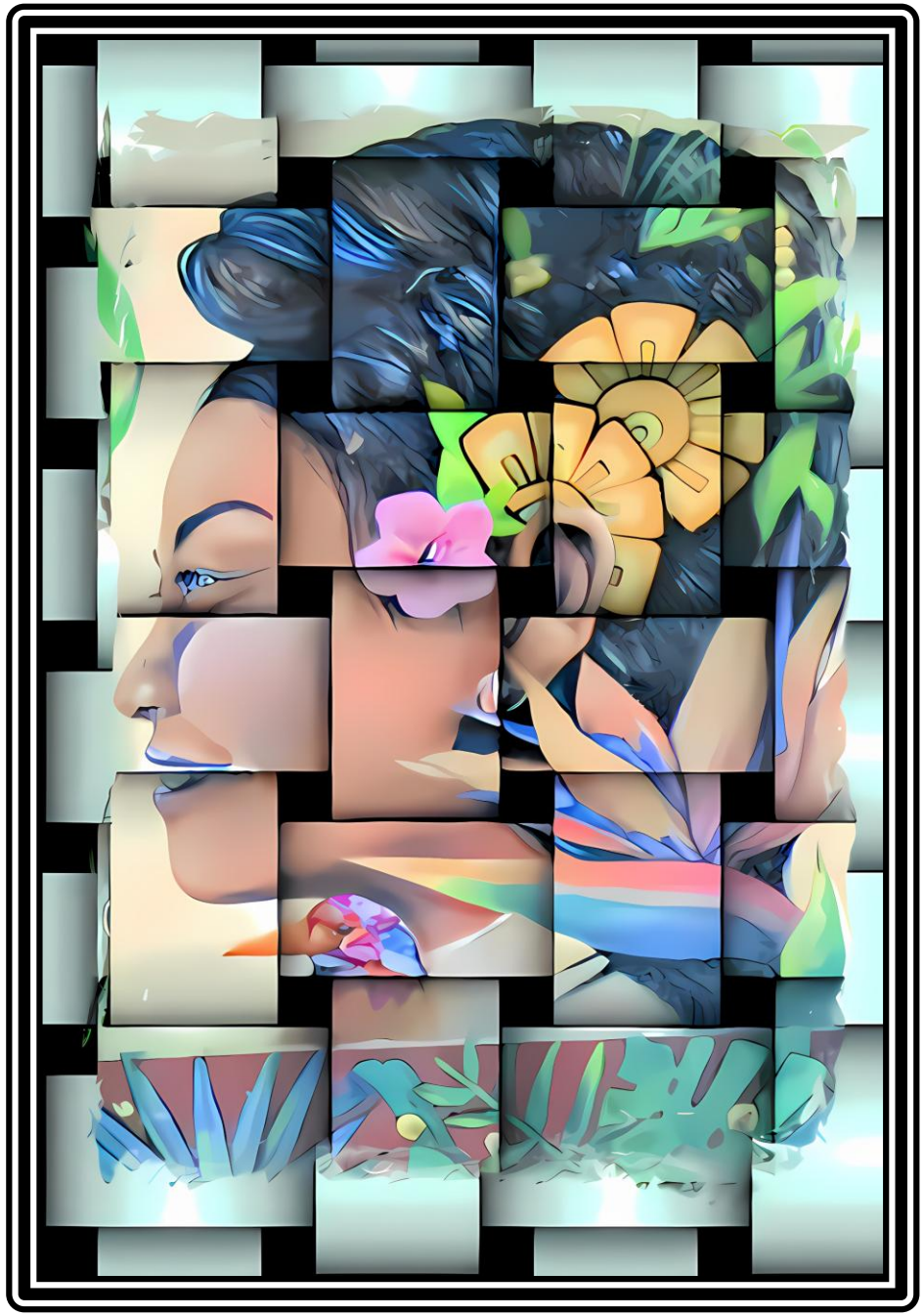
Despite the presence of so many people, conversations were conspicuously absent, with only the occasional nod exchanged among the assembled crowd.

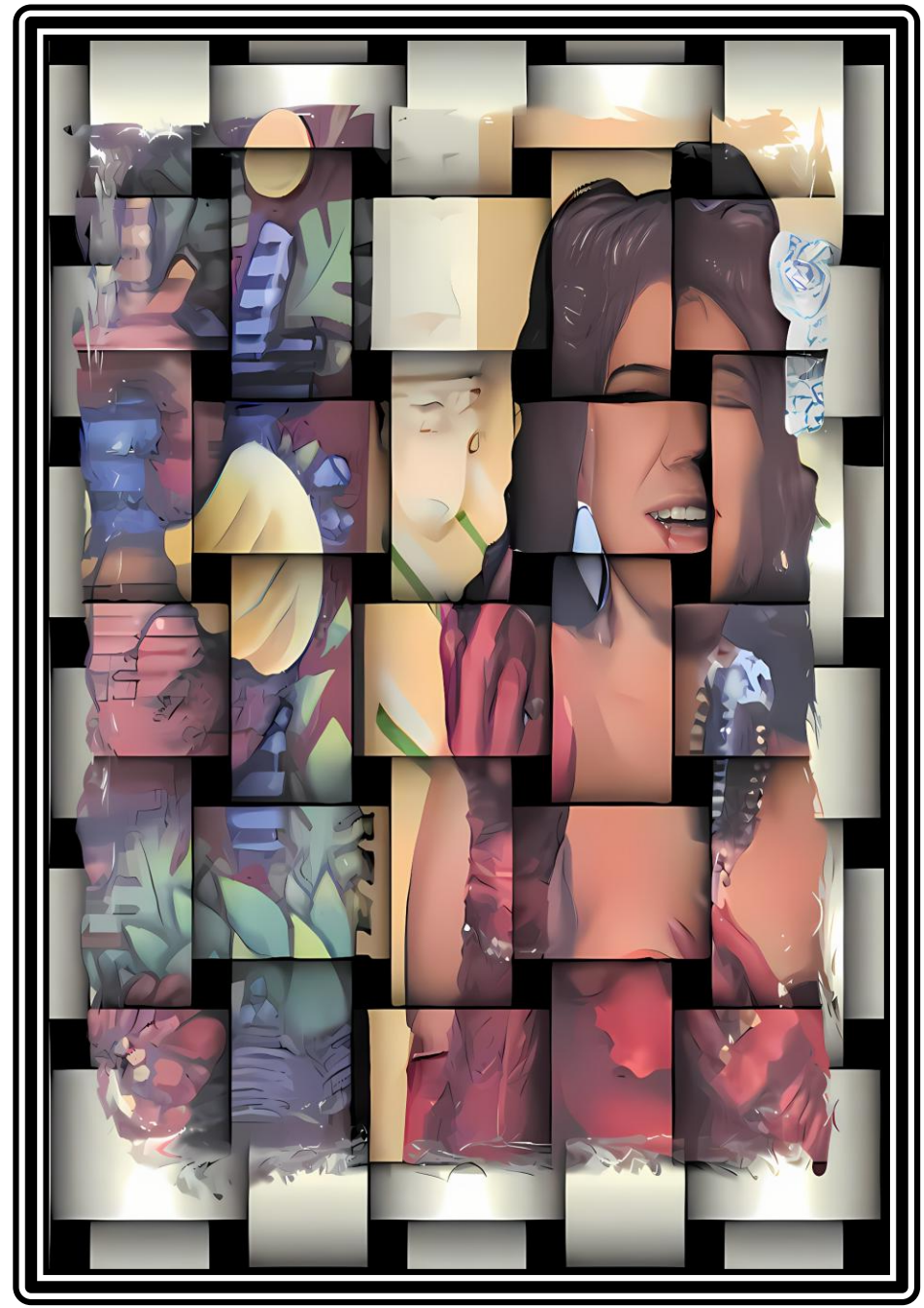
Perhaps the late hour contributed to this eerie stillness, or maybe it was a subconscious effort

to remain anonymous, as if we were all reluctant to reveal our identities in case of a future police lineup.

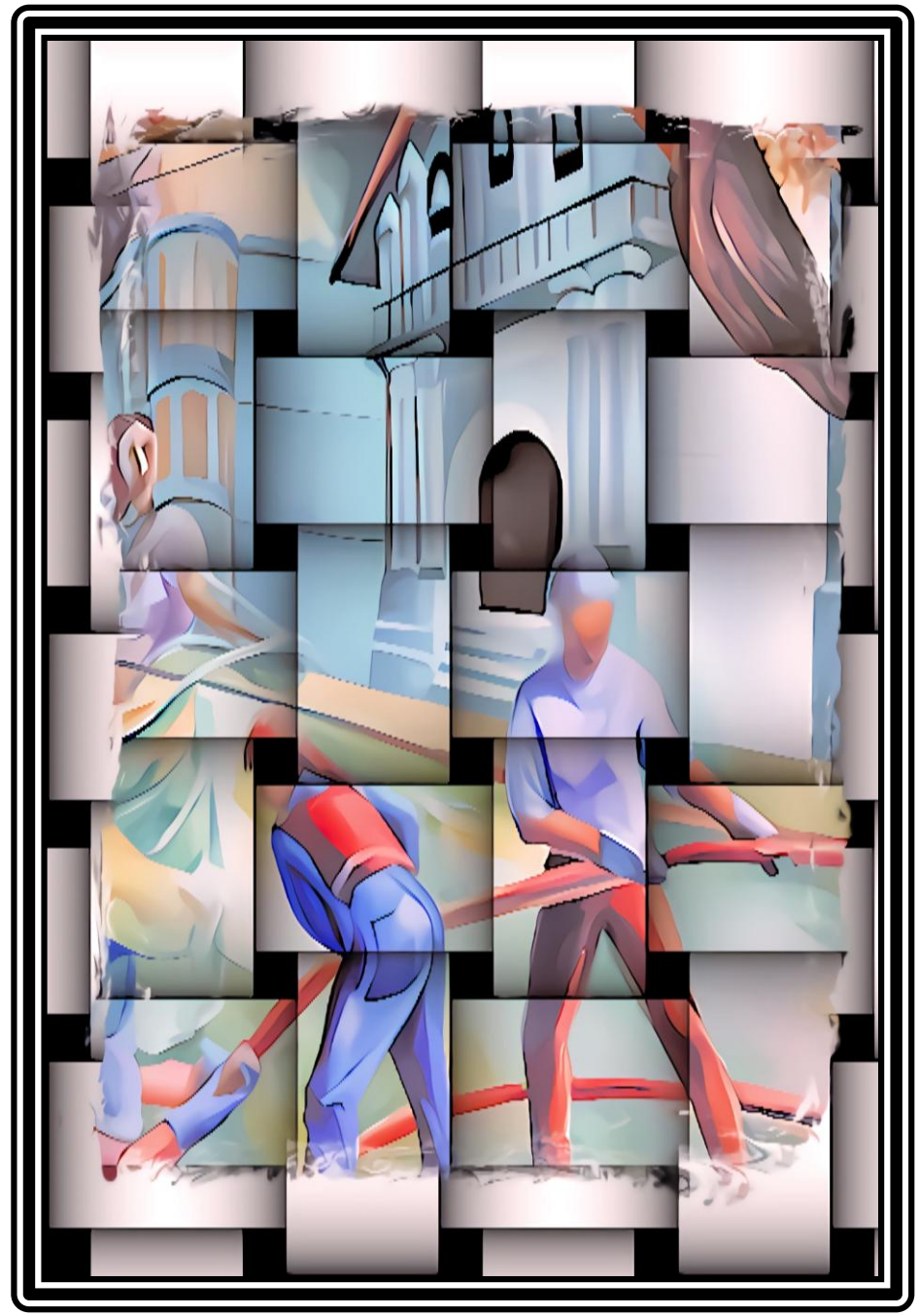
Reflecting on that night, I began to wonder if my prolonged stay had caused me to perceive all the foreign faces around me as increasingly indistinguishable, blurring the lines of individuality in a sea of weary travelers.

I was completely unaware that the Domestic Terminal had a strict closing time of midnight, and I could not find any signs in English indicating this crucial detail. Just moments after realizing my predicament, a group of local para-military airport officers began their rounds, asking for "PAPERS...PLEASE?"

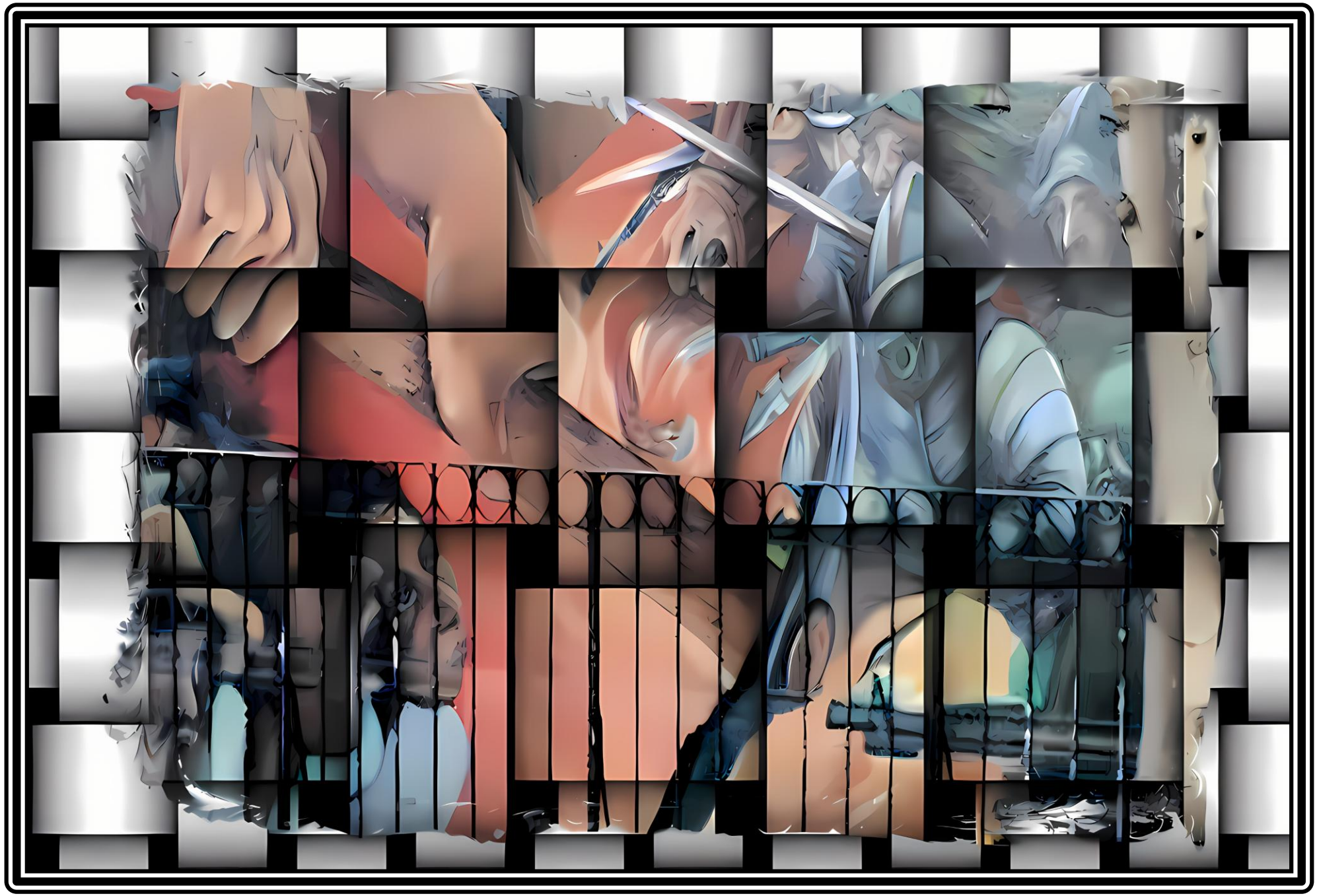




Despite the initial tension, they turned out to be quite courteous.
Although several officers felt it necessary to conduct a thorough inspection of my documentation, they were understanding and allowed me to remain in the terminal rather than forcing me out into the night.
I expressed my gratitude to them, and as they nodded in acknowledgment, I wished them a good night, relieved that the situation had unfolded as positively as it did.
I was fortunate to find an all-night Family Mart and a McDonald's conveniently located just across the hallway from my spot, providing me with easy access to snacks and meals at any hour.



However, the nearby bookstore, which offered a cozy retreat for book lovers, unfortunately closed its doors around 1 AM, limiting my options for late-night browsing.
The airport's Wi-Fi was surprisingly effective, especially if you knew how to bypass the 45-minute time limit, allowing me to stay connected longer than expected.
Additionally, the presence of numerous charging stations was a lifesaver, particularly in the Domestic Terminal, which primarily caters to Japanese travelers.
This combination of amenities made my experience at the airport not only bearable but also quite enjoyable.
The early morning hour of five-thirty arrived far



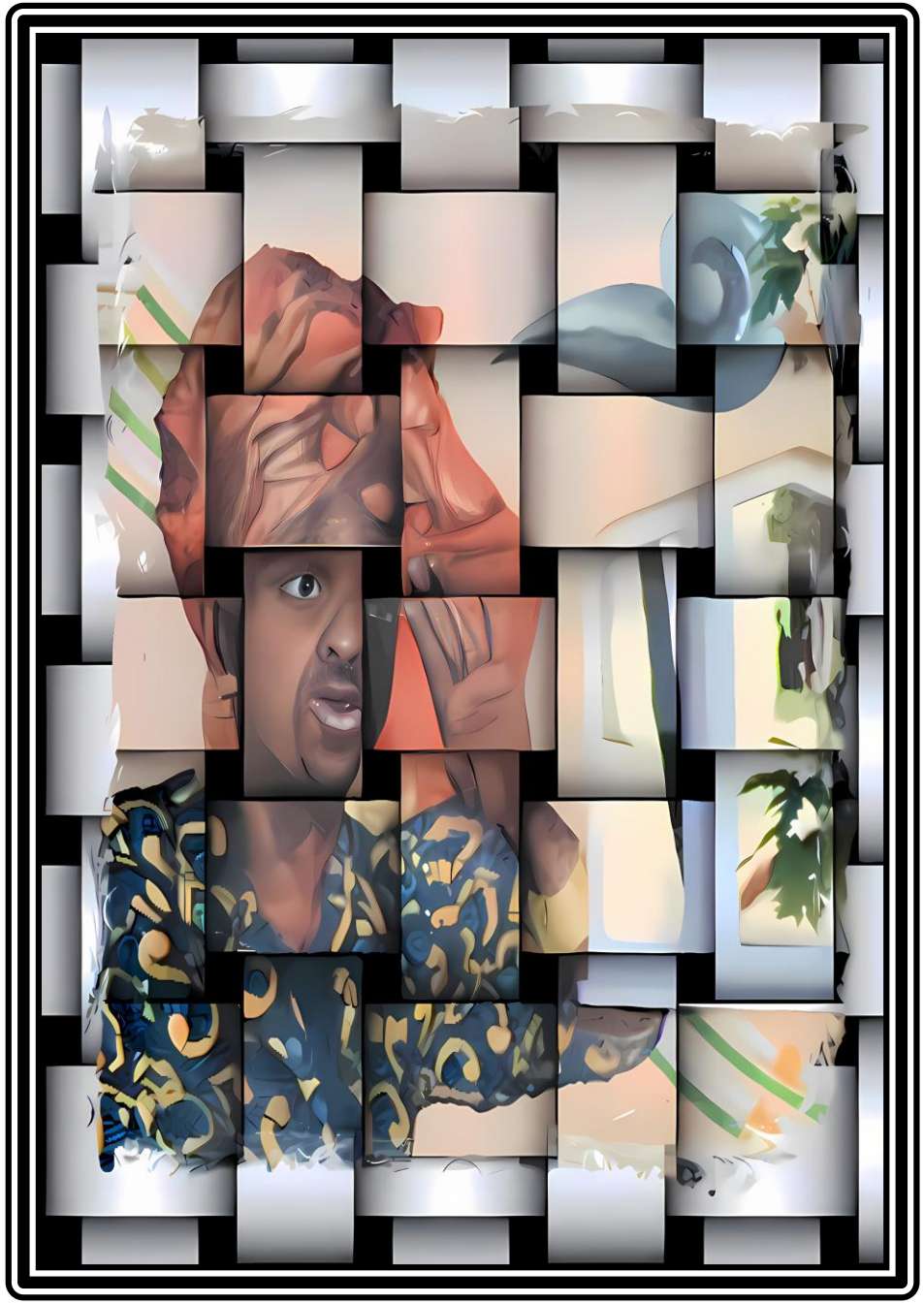
too soon, and I found myself hauling my luggage up the stairs to the International Terminal, as the elevators and escalators remained dormant until six.

The dimly lit corridor echoed with the sound of my footsteps, a solitary reminder of the day ahead.

By the time I reached the ticket counter, I was almost the first in line, eagerly awaiting its opening at six-thirty.

The anticipation of my journey filled the air, mingling with the faint scent of coffee from a nearby café, as I prepared for the adventure that lay ahead.

As the clock struck 6:30 AM, the anticipation in



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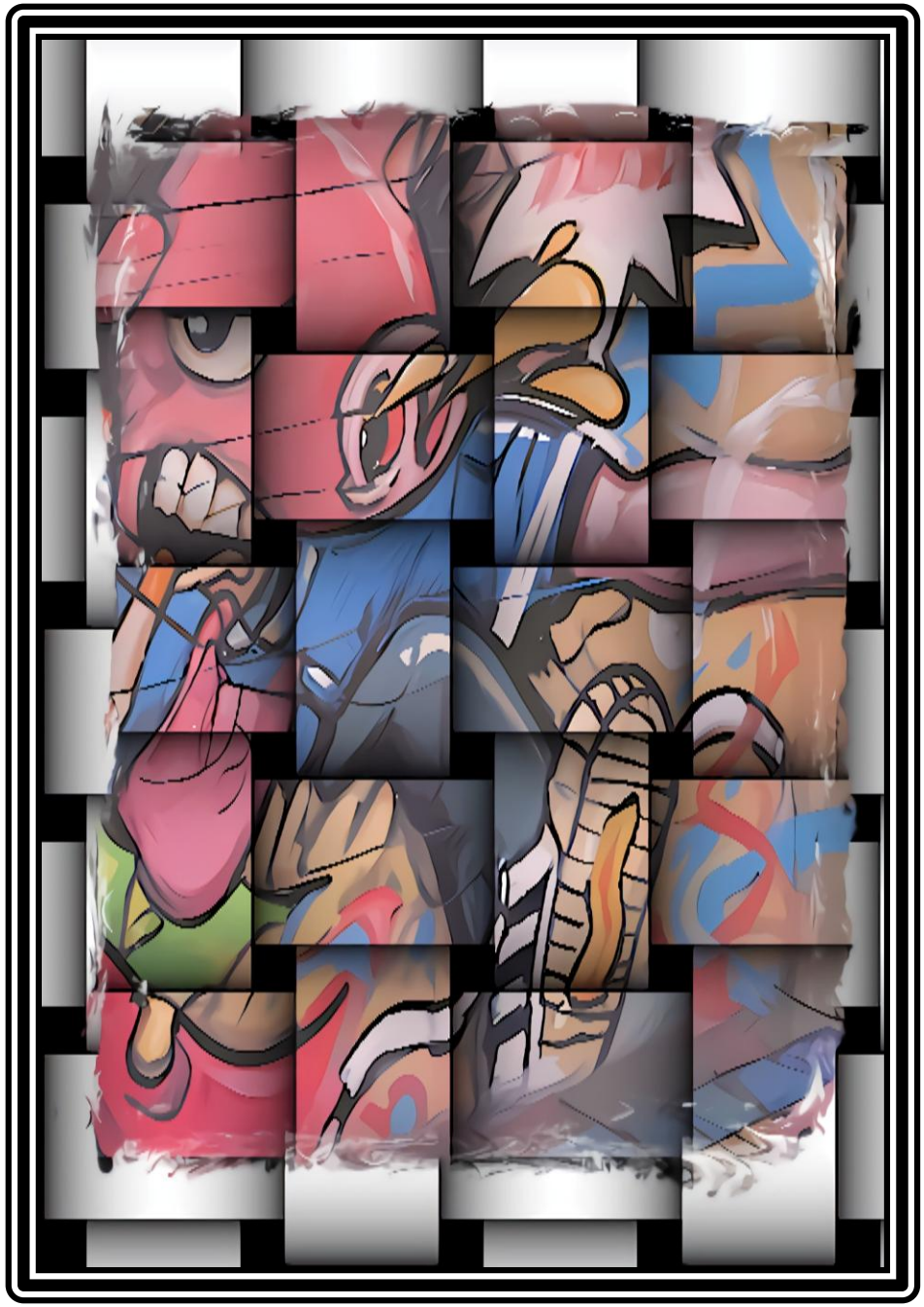
the airport began to wane, and by the time it approached 7 AM, the atmosphere was thick with tension.

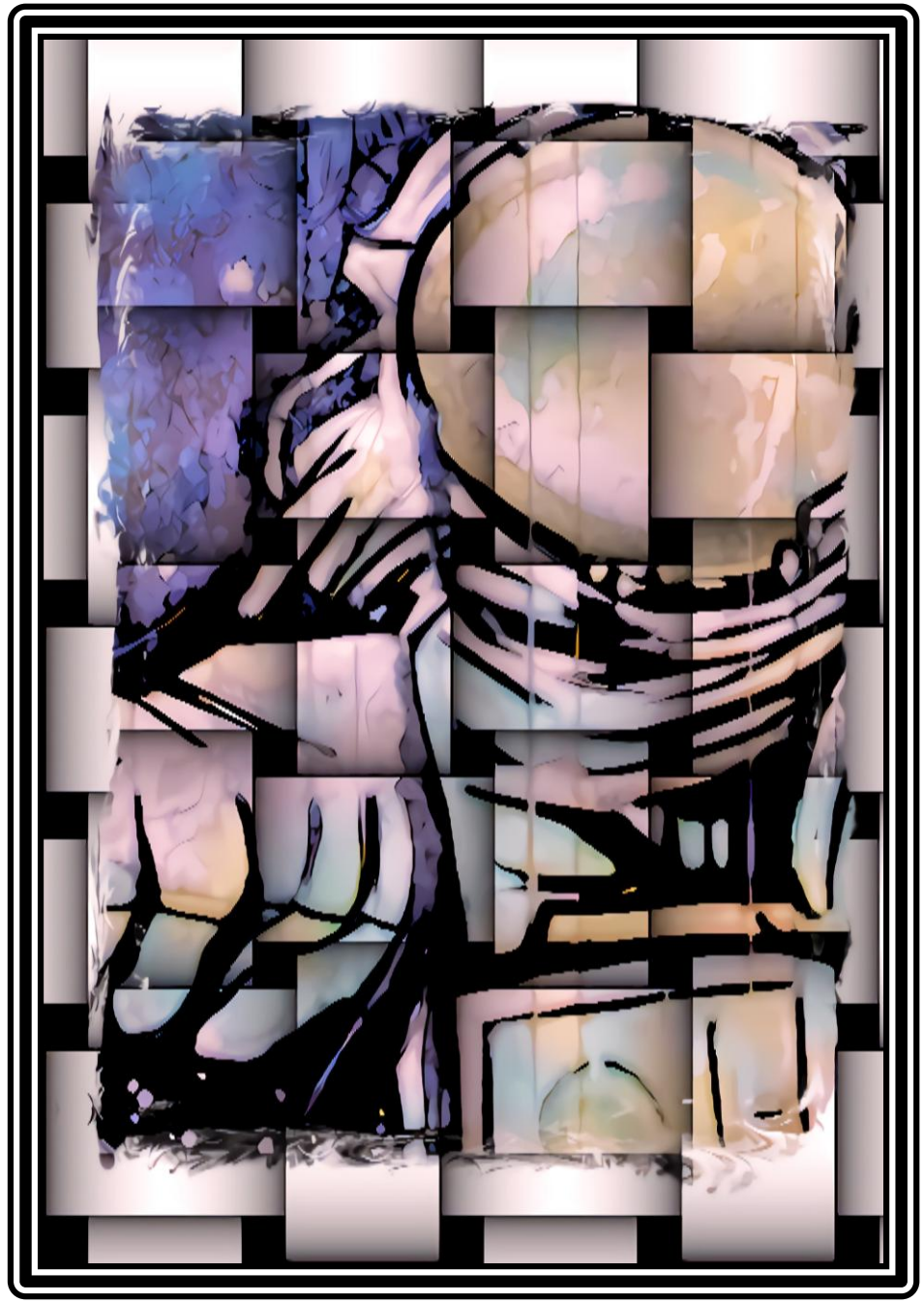
The frazzled counter attendant finally broke the silence, delivering the unwelcome news that my flight had been postponed for reasons that remained unclear.

By 7:30 AM, her voice trembled as she announced the inevitable: my flight had been officially canceled.

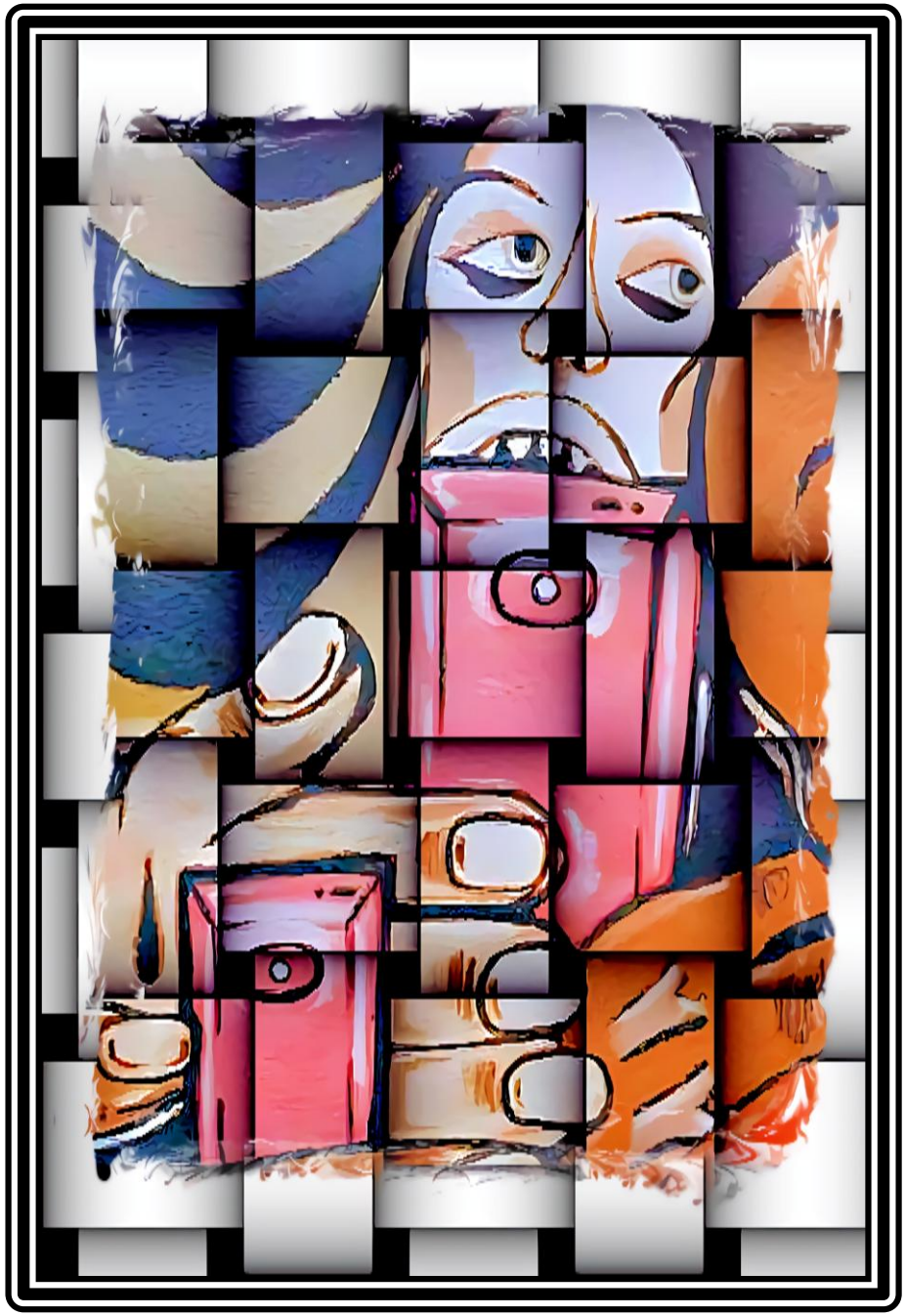
However, in a small gesture of goodwill, she offered to rebook me on the next day's flight without any additional fees.

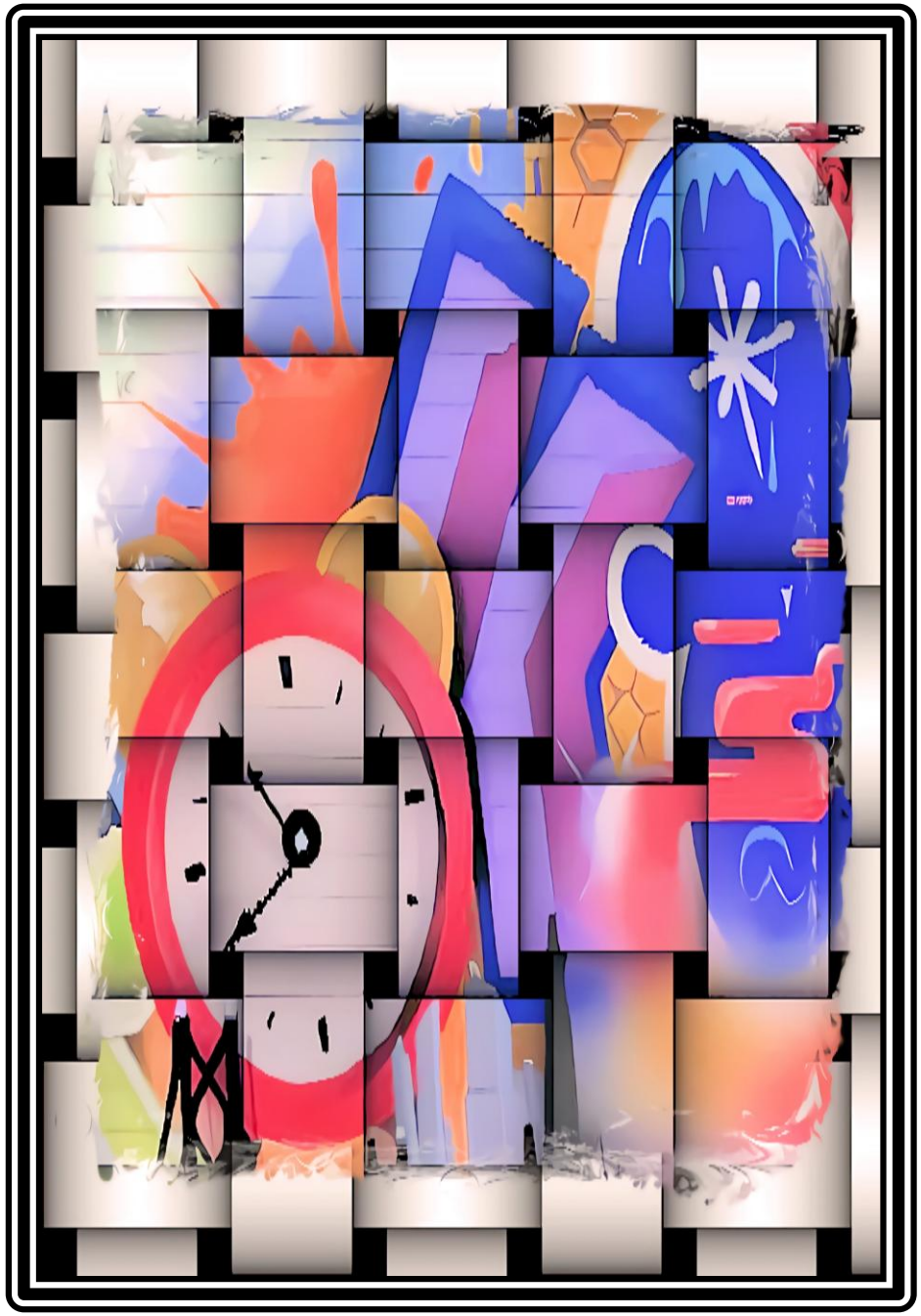
While her attempt to alleviate the situation was appreciated, the frustration of the morning's





events lingered, leaving me to ponder the unpredictability of travel and the challenges that often accompany it.
Here I am, ready to keep you updated with any news as it comes my way.
By the way, if you happen to have any spare change, I could really use it right now; that enticing Happy Meal from McDonald's is practically calling out to me!
The thought of those crispy fries and a juicy burger is hard to resist, and I can almost taste the deliciousness.
If you could help me out, I would greatly appreciate it, and who knows, maybe we can share a meal together soon!





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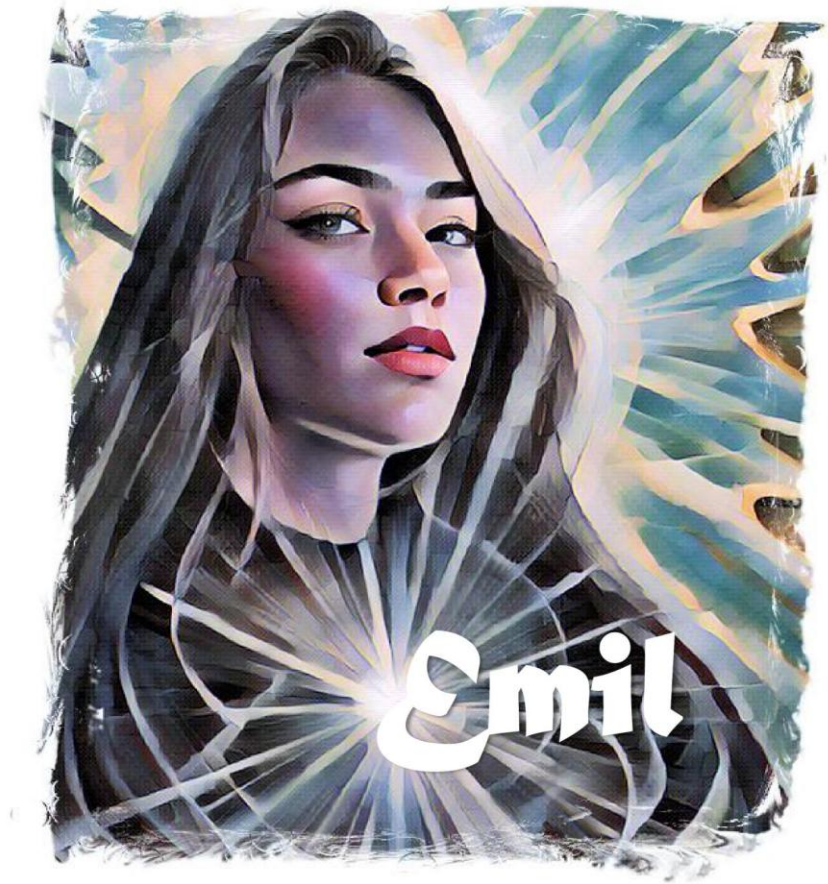

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HOBO TOURS REVISITED

Wat Saman Rattanaram

Emil

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I LOST MYSELF IN A

TRUCKER'S PRAYER

WAT SAMAN RATTANARAM'S CHINESE SHRINE

Emil

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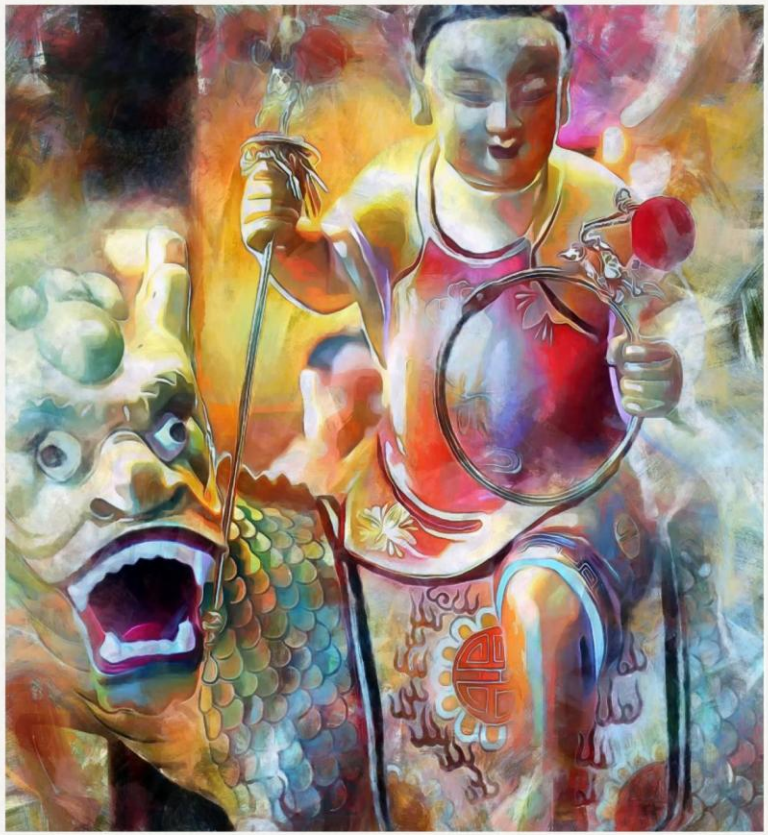
30 September 1922

"LIVING IN INTERESTING TIMES"



Emil's HOBO TOURS

"In The Beginning there was the Memory"

Episode 1:

"The Memorial Chapel of the Jedi Refugees"

{Out in the Nebraska Wastelands}

Emil

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Visions of a Brighter Day # 1

"Going Back to the Old"

Emil

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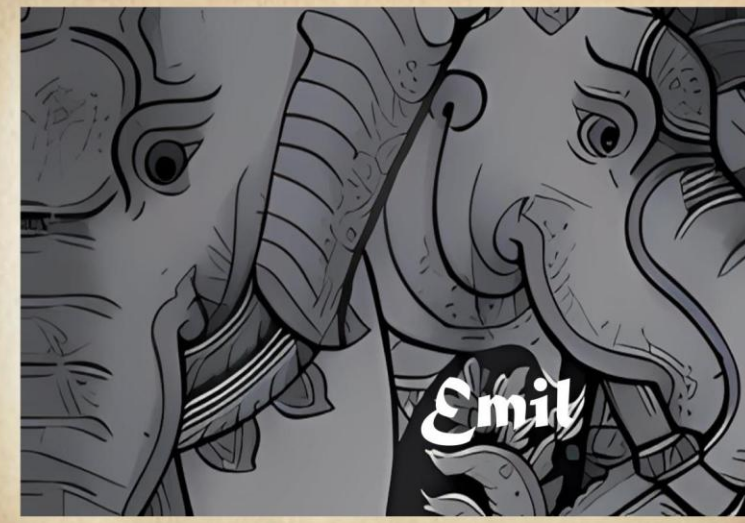

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"ETCHED INTO THE DEPTHS OF MY CONSCIOUSNESS"